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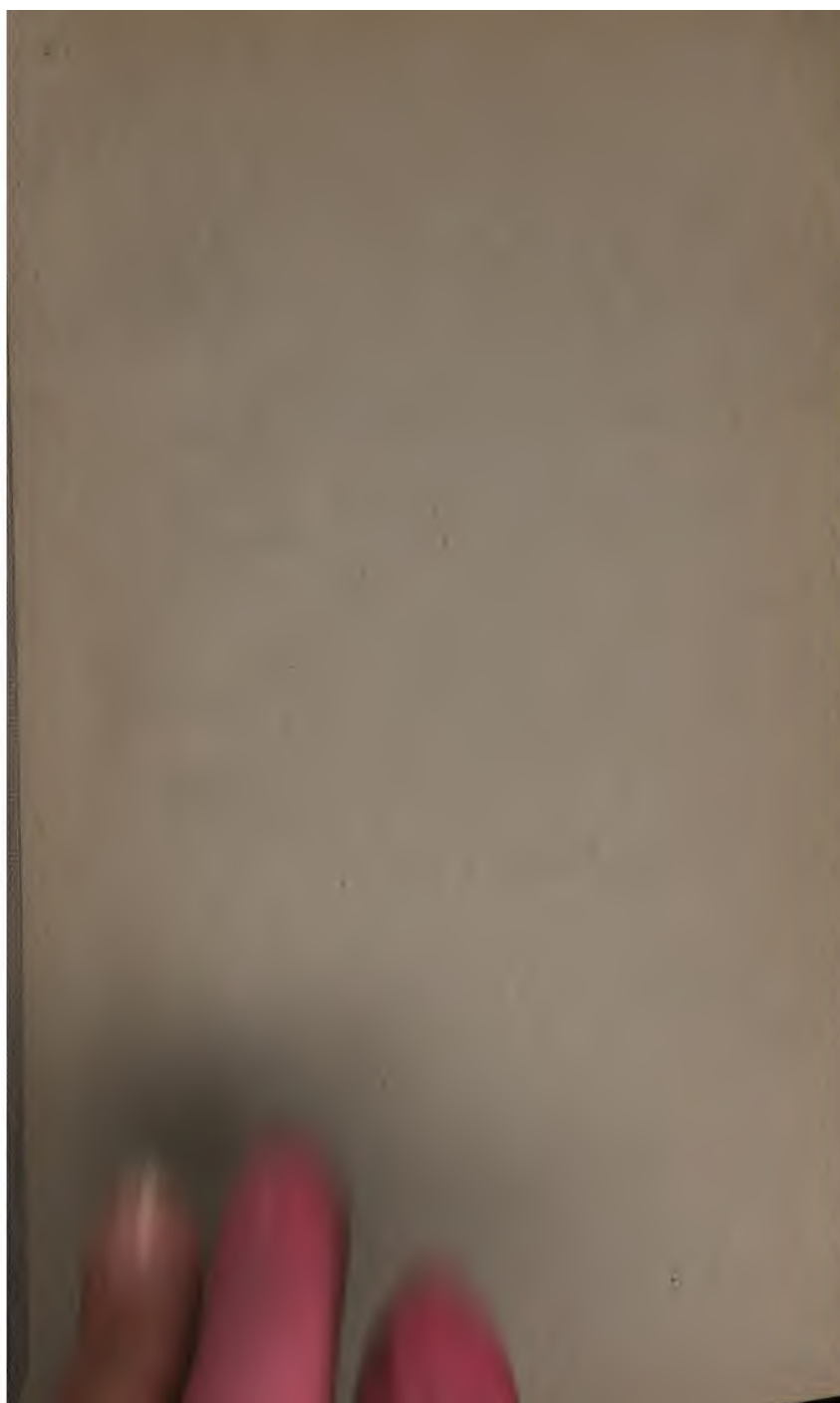
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BY'GONE FLORENCE
(FIRENZE SCOMPARSA)

BY

Cav. GUIDO CAROCCI

TRANSLATED BY

HENRY G. HUNTINGTON

LATE CONSUL OF THE UNITED STATES IN ITALY



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CHAPTER I.

LOCAL CHARACTER.

IN Italy, each province, city and village has its special and peculiar type, its art and its own determined character.

And this special and personal expression, which we may call local color, is defined in its manifestations of art, in the construction of its churches and palaces, in its works of painting and sculpture, in its manifold decorations, and in all those productions which have for basis or inspiration an artistic sentiment.

This is the reason that Italy, from the Alps to Etna, presents such a diversity of character, and that art schools, differing from each other so essentially, have grown and prospered and handed their creations down to our own days.

In Italy no one city resembles another, and nearly all have maintained, through the stirring events of centuries, that typical individuality which offers to the visitor such attraction, interest, and instruction.

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It is therefore exactly this variety of type and this local color which should be cherished, maintained, and guarded with affection, because the picturesque value of city and town offers an interest similar to that excited in visitors by the rare collections of the museums and galleries.

Take away this variety and give way to the spirit of modern invasion, to that sceptical utilitarian sentiment obstinately rebellious to every inspiration of art, to every record of past glory: continue this modern war, against all which is old, and you will obtain the charming result of having reduced all our cities to one monotonous level of hideous uniformity in line and color, so characteristic of this age.

Thoughtless persons may rejoice over this substitution of the antique by the modern, and the adoption of broad, rectangular streets with gaudily colored buildings, but real true Art, which derives its sweetest and happiest inspirations from these timestained, picturesque surroundings, will receive new and disastrous blows, while the entire country loses its most valued attractions.

I would not by this deny the right of modern style and requirements to manifest itself in its own way, but as there is ample space where this may be done, allowing full swing to every architectural vagary and extravagance, without destroying the record of past ages. I only deplore the modern spirit which demolishes without necessity.

It is well, at this point, to explain clearly that to

love, appreciate or desire the antique, does not necessarily imply an extension of this sentiment to that which, while antique, is neither beautiful, picturesque nor possesses artistic qualities, nor does it deny the requirements of modern existence under pretence of preserving worthless antiquities.

Hygiene, decorum, and viability have their recognized rights, but let not modern reformers deny the same liberty to us lovers of artistic beauty, of patriotic and historic memories, and to all those who cultivate a study of the beautiful, and cherish the valuable records of the past.

There are many cities that for their history, art and fame should be respected more than others, because they are pages of the history of centuries, precious examples of artistic glory, and living records of times character and customs that would otherwise have been lost.

These cities cannot be treated like modern villages.

Building, viability and comfort should be subordinate to the sacred claims of history and art, and if we refuse to recognize historical traditions and memories, and the opinions of artists and antiquarians, we expose ourselves to derision as modern vandals.

This epithet is none too strong for those who have proposed to fill up the picturesque canals of Venice in order to make mean little modern streets, to tear down the picturesque gates of Padua, to plaster and white-wash the time-stained walls and towers of San Gimignano, that little medioeval jewel, or for those who

would attempt to modernize such cities as Verona, Siena and Perugia.

Among these cities, sacred to art and rich in historical associations, in which no modern vulgarity ought to be tolerated, Florence has a claim to special regard and consideration.

It is Florence which in its edifices offers such peculiar and determined characteristics; Florence which represents an art all her own, individual, unrivalled and unexcelled; Florence which, after Rome, has been the most important, animated and influential centre of the beautiful; Florence which has everywhere diffused, like a splendid star, the revelations of an art that signalled the triumph of harmony, form and realism.

For these reasons, Florence ought to have its special « cachet » and not be the servile imitator of other unscrupulously modernized cities, but present at first glance an impression which shows it to be the city of Giotto, Donatello and Michelangiolo, in whose midst lived Dante Alighieri, Niccolò Machiavelli and Pier Capponi.

And besides the memory of its great men, the places where famous events have occurred ought to be recognizable and not transformed and modernized out of all resemblance.

The stranger, who does not hurry through the land by the fastest trains, but stays to conscientiously study the places he visits, arrives in Florence with the hope, if not the certainty, of seeing places made famous by important events, such as the palace, where a liberty loving people drove out Gualtiero di Brienne and, sub-

sequently, the grasping Medici, — the hall, where Pier Capponi, with splendid courage, subdued haughty Carlo VIII, — the bridge, where from the blood of Buondelmonte sprung the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, — the convent where Savonarola thundered against the enemies of the Faith and country, — the vestry, where Lorenzo the Magnificent took refuge from the conspiracy of the Pazzi, — the solitary monastery, where was enacted the piteous drama of Piccarda Donati, and the tower from which Lupo bombarded the city's besiegers.

The destruction of the most characteristic parts of the city, of its most original and noteworthy edifices, the widening of an old street, the plastering over of an old stone façade, or the transformation of an ancient quarter, gain special importance in a city like Florence, so rich in art treasures, in traditions of learning and history, and are deplored by the student and amateur who dread the destruction of every valuable relic of the past, so sacred a portion of our inheritance.

We must have patience if the exigencies of modern comfort and hygiene could not be restrained by the artistic or historical importance of edifices where it was necessary to knock down walls and open narrow streets, which the expansion of the city required, such as Via Calzaioli, Via Cerretani, Via Panzani and Via Buja.

Certainly the medioeval aspect of Florence suffered, but in these cases the change was imperative, and the lovers of the antique contented themselves by cherishing the memories of the lost past.

One might also have become resigned to other losses, if the alterations subsequently undertaken had been made so as to reconcile the exigencies of modern life with the claims of art and history.

Instead, in certain so-called improvements, — and it is sufficient to recall the transformation of the old centre, — there seems to have been a preconceived determination to destroy every trace of the antique, and substitute it by modern style and character.

For our own part, now that the work of destruction is complete and that we can only lament, like the prophet Jeremiah weeping over the ruins of Jerusalem, we should not complain, were we not menaced by fresh, and no less disastrous innovations.

The rising wave of modernism can no longer be restrained within the limits of the old centre, but seeks a new outlet towards the Arno wherein to construct a straight street lined by monotonous, modern arcades, and to accomplish this does not hesitate to destroy a group of buildings rich in artistic treasure, between Piazza San Biagio and Ponte Vecchio.

This would be another mortal blow to our love of medioeval art, another bit of this original and picturesque quarter of Florence destroyed, regardless of the protests of those in whom there still remains some sentiment of the beautiful.

But having experienced the folly of attempting to stem the tide of invading modernism, we fear there is nothing to be done but deplore this tendency.

In this way, we shall have further opportunity of

mourning over the vandalism of our age, and an occasion to dedicate future pages to the history of Florence that has disappeared.

Without further discussion, let us now devote our attention to the record of Florence that has passed away, — a resurrection of old memories and impressions, a fantastic journey through a by-gone world, a kind of dream that will re-create for us what once possessed such ineffable charm, but which has now been swept away in the avalanche of the past.



CHAPTER II.

OLD MEMORIES.

THIRTY years ago, the crowbar and pick-axe of the demolisher, had hardly initiated its work of transformation.

In the history of the civic alterations, the impression produced by the widening of Via Calzaioli, which was to rival the Corso of Roma and the Via Toledo of Naples, was still profound.

The Florentines of those peaceful, somnolent but prosperous times saw torn down, one after the other the massive towers of the Adimari, Alamanneschi, Cavicciuli, the sumptuous places of the Bisdomini, Adimari, Bonaccorsi, Macci, Abati, the historic *loggia* of Neghittosa, the remains of the church of San Bartolo in the Corso and of Santa Maria Nipotecosa, and united in one straight broad street those irregular, dark, crooked streets which connected the Piazza del Duomo with the Piazza of the Grand Duke (now Signoria) and were called Corso of the Adimari,

Via Cacciaioli, Via Calzaioli, Corso and Via de' Pittori, Via de' Farsettai and Via del Canto al Diamante.

About the same time the Piazza del Duomo was enlarged by tearing down the ugly canon's residence which had been built up against the cathedral on the south side.

The necessity of better circulation also removed a picturesque tower at the foot of the Santa Trinita bridge which was connected with the old castellated palace of the Spini (so long occupied on the ground floor by Vieusseux's library) by an arch that spanned the Lung'Arno Acciajoli.

Once the passion of bricks and mortar had invaded Florence its character quickly changed and the outstanding meadows and farms were soon covered by modern houses, thus completing the end of Via Cavour, and forming new quarters of the city near the Cascine and Piazza Indipendenza.

All this was legitimate expansion and in no manner interfered with the artistic and antique part of the town.

Thirty years ago Florence was remarkable for its original character of beautiful simplicity mixed with medioeval severity.

Some streets were a faithful representation of Florence of the *trecento*, lonely, silent and lined by gardens that reminded one of the far off country.

Enterily surrounding the town, were the medioeval walls here and there surmounted by towers or interrupted by the gates which connected the city with its rapidly growing outstreets.

Here and there, modern taste had erected some

villa or palace whose character struck a discordant note of form or color among the serious and artistic creations of the past.

But Florence generally preserved its local color and its picturesque and artistic portions excited the enthusiasm of strangers from all parts of the world, who came here to draw inspiration or perfect study.

And in harmony with the character of the streets and buildings, certain curious old customs and habits, slightly changed, transformed and diluted were still in vogue, but which our generation has seen dead and buried.

The *palii*, which celebrated the victories of the Florentine militia in the middle ages; the fairs, feeble souvenirs of the commercial prosperity of other days, spectacles and popular shows, formerly held in great favor and managed by committees of the people; all these old customs, whether beautiful or ugly, are now only « memories of the past » or have become, such miserable, emasculated fêtes that if a stranger demands their origin the Florentine is at a loss to reply.

Nevertheless, in illustrating Florence of the past ages, writing its history, collecting its traditions and poetic legends, describing its types and customs, studying its art and its « *raison d'être* » one cannot do less than recall these popular customs which, in the midst of a retrospective picture of the times, give the animating effect of bright bits of color.

And in passing through the Florentine streets which have come down to our days, unaffected by the changes of ages, we must not omit to notice certain other pe-

culiarities that besides being decorative had a deep significance and purpose of their own, connected with history, events, customs, and tradition of the city.

We will notice some of these examples which more appropriately illustrate our study on Florence of the past, with speaking documents and original notes.

For example, on many old palaces are painted or sculptured, coats of arms, on whose shield is a great cross, red when painted, with a crown on its perpendicular arm.

This cross was the coat of arms of the Florentine people, and was painted or carved on the houses of those noble families who, after the democratic reform of government was adopted, renounced their titles, their ancient family names, and enrolled themselves in one of the *crofts* to become plain citizen in order to be eligible for holding office, from which the mobility were excluded.

Of painted coats of arms, I recall two which still exist, one on the Canigiani palace in Via dei Bardi, which was formerly occupied by a branch of the house of Bardi, who changed their name to Larioni; the other in Via delle Oche, on an ancient palace belonging to the Cortigiani when they separated from the Bisdomini family.

Of the sculptured arms, there is a marble one on a house opposite the Loggia of the Mercato Nuovo which belonged to a branch of the Cavalcanti family called Cavallereschi and an other of stone at N.º 5 Via Santi Apostoli, formerly a palace of the Buondelmonti, who for some time called themselves Da Montebuoni.

A coat of arms bearing an eagle with outstretched wings clutching in its claws a dragon, is the symbol of the Guelfs and was placed over the confiscated houses of Ghibellines or rebels.

There were a great many of these in the Mercato Nuovo and Via Porta Rossa and there is still one on the tower at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, over the Arno.

Many coats of arms of the different corporations of the arts and crafts are displayed on houses and shops, which shewed they had become the property of these bodies, generally left as legacies for promoting the purposes of the associations.

The most frequent emblems are those of the Art of the Wool (Agnus Dei) of the Merchants (an eagle above a small bale of merchandise) and of the Doctors and Apothecaries (a tabernacle with the Madonna and infant Jesus).

From the coats of arms we will pass to other peculiar characteristics of the Florentine houses.

The towers, without doors and having no communication with the adjoining houses were a singular type of defense during the factional broils of the town.

The only approach was by means of ladders which were afterwards withdrawn so that those within were unassailable and the tower impregnable.

Certain square openings, closed by a stone lid in the centre of the arches and under the castellated turrets, were used for throwing down every sort of material used in defence.

And the smaller square openings in the walls of the towers and many palaces served for supporting scaffoldings, both for repairs and for purposes of attack and defence.

In the old Florentine palaces, one of the predominating architectural characteristics was the projecting cornice of little arches supported by stones jutting out from the main walls, just below the first floor, upon which the whole weight of the building rested.

By this means the eaves were made to project still further into the street giving protection from sun and rain to the foundations and shops on the ground floor.

In all the medioeval palaces the number of irons of various forms jutting out of the façade is remarkable.

Above the ground floor were massive wrought iron hooks sometimes simple, sometimes supporting rings; in some of the palaces instead of hooks there are irons in the shape of a gothic M reversed held up by a ring above which was generally placed a roughly wrought head of some animal.

These hooks, which formerly served to tie up horses, at last became objects of art and decoration, like the beautiful specimens on the walls of the Strozzi palace.

On the corners of the streets, at the same height, the rings were surmounted by staffs of iron and rings for supporting flags, oriflames and standards.

Some of these standard supporters are exquisitely beautiful specimens of artistic wrought iron, such as those of the Strozzi palace, Loggia of the Rucellai, Ri-

casoli palace in Via Maggio, Del Turco palace, formerly Borgherini in Borgo Santi Apostoli, &c.

These supporters besides the usual family banners also bore those of the militia companies, when a resident of the house was an officer of one of these organisations.

On the corner of various palaces may be seen large wrought iron lanthorns or *lumiere*, as they were formerly called, of different designs according to the period in which they were made.

The oldest are very simple, being small cages in the shape of flower buds formed of vertical and transverse slips of iron turned up at the apex in lily shape and having a spike in the centre for supporting the torches or lamp.

Afterwards more elaborate forms were designed such as rounded or octagonal shaped chapels and temples with openings like windows of which one of the most celebrated is that of the Strozzi palace, while others may be seen at the Palazzo Riccardi, now the Prefettura, and at the Guadagni palace, now Gherardesca, in the Piazza Santo Spirito.

They served, as already said, for use as street lanthorns, but at the same time had a special significance as a sign of great distinction, being conceded as an honor only to well deserving citizens and families.

Besides these, there were irons under the cornices of the first floor which supported the stakes from which hung tapestries and carpets on gala occasions.

The large rings at the sides of the windows were

for flag staffs, torches, or for the poles which held up awnings or window shades.

To support the transverse poles of the awnings there were other iron spikes called *cicogne* fastened above the windows.

More complicated and singular are certain iron brackets which were used to support planks on which the dyed skeins of wool and cloth were laid to dry.

Such was the extension of the business of dying wool and silk that the majority of houses in town were dedicated to that industry, and on certain occasions the streets presented a singular appearance with rows of brilliantly tinted, dyed stuffs, one above the other, on the fronts of the houses.

We could continue, *ad infinitum*, to describe the minutest details of household economy and daily life in the past ages — and, insignificant as many of them appear, they are not without interest as an index of the life and manners of those far off times.

Florence of the Middle Ages and Renaissance is now broken up, cut into small pieces and lost in the midst of modern constructions; the old streets have no longer the harmonious uniformity of their severe aspect; out of the forest of castellated towers which reared their heads from the dark masses of the city beneath, only a few broken-off trunks remain; of the beautiful *loggie*, perched under the roof serving as open-air reception rooms of the nobility, hardly a trace remains in their walled up sides; the dark and simple little chapels have been supplanted by vulgar gaudy tabernacles

filled with cheap barocco tinsel, and hideous vulgar modern ornaments.

Only traces and memories of the past remain, and while we study the first and conjure up the second, we hope we may attract the attention and interest of the reader, as we accompany him through Florence of the past.



PORTA SAN GALLO.





CHAPTER III.

THE WALLS AND CITY-GATES

THE broad and handsome boulevards, lined by shady trees, flanked by rows of modern buildings and here and there interrupted by squares and flowering gardens, enclose the city in a semi-circle, whose ends terminate at the river Arno, and follow almost precisely the lines of the old walls.

Across the bridges Florence lays within its ancient walls almost intact, while on its right bank the walls, which had defended the town for six centuries, have been razed to the ground to make room for the growing town.

The old gates and two towers are the only survivals of the mania of modernism, and we see the Santa Croce, San Gallo and Prato gates isolated in the centre of intensely recent arcaded buildings that form the modern squares.

In 1280 and 1300 the Florentines expanded from the narrow circle which comprised the city, between the

Arno and the Duomo on one side and the Carraia and Grazie bridges on the other, and enclosed the thickly settled outskirts within the walls which formed the city's boundary, until they were destroyed some thirty years since.

The labors progressed very slowly, on account of the many wars that took away the able-bodied men and absorbed the public funds, and it was not until the beginning of the 14th century that the different gates and castellated walls had enclosed Florence in their massive embrace.

Many of the celebrated architects and engineers of those times designed and directed these works, but the principal author was probably Arnolfo di Cambio the creator of the Duomo, to whom is attributed the design of several of the city gates.

We have seen these walls altered in their lines, proportions and structure, but we can gain a clear idea of what they were from old drawings and the affresco in the hall of Clement VII in the Palazzo Vecchio gives a faithful portrait of the siege of Florence, preceding the fall of the Republic, and shows its formidable lines of towers surmounting the walls, with their vigorous military character (*see* frontispiece).

The walls, high, castellated and provided with a stone platform behind the battlements from one end to other, were faced by large deep moats, and were interrupted at regular intervals by towers and projecting bastions.

The gates were surmounted by towers 114 feet high

with large openings, and the castellated summit juttred out from the main walls supported by projecting arches.

Another wall before each of the gates, as may still be seen at Siena, was connected with the gate by a drawbridge across the moat.

A faint idea of the appearance of these gates may be gathered from that of San Niccolò, although it has lost its summit of projecting battlements which defended it from attack.

This great specimen of military architecture of the middle ages, when in its original proportions, must have been of imposing size and of mighty strength.

From the top of the tower floated the flag of the Republic, and suspended by iron hooks from the battlements hung at intervals iron lanthorns, in which bits of resinous wood burned at night.

In our times the aspect of the walls is very materially changed. A great part of the battlements had fallen or been destroyed to the level of the platforms, the towers had been cut off and the principal gates underwent such radical transformation that they became mean, dwarfed and lowered as they are seen today.

The superb towers, that rose for a hundred feet above the surrounding country, were thrown down by order of Cosimo I about 1532 and there was only left the first floor above the arch, which contained a battery of guns and was covered by a roof supported by heavy columns of masonry for protecting the ar-

tillery-men, as may be seen today in the Porta San Gallo.

Of the picturesque ramparts before the gates, no vestige remains and the drawbridges were replaced by stone structures which afterwards became filled up entirely as also a great part of the moat.

The *Mugnone* stream, which emptied into the moats in whose water the walls of the city were reflected, was transferred to an artificial stone channel, while certain parts of the moat were allowed to freeze for obtaining ice.

One of the largest portions of the moat was at Porta Pinti and in summer served for the game of *pallone*, the high walls protecting the grounds from the sun; the other called « il Cardinale » was near the Fortezza da Basso and in winter was used for skating, a pastime introduced by the numerous foreigners in Florence.

Two roads, one external the other internal, followed the walls. The outside one was the gaier and more animated, on account of the constant passing of carts and carriages towards the gates, and the suburbs contained modern houses, taverns, open air restaurants and gardens.

The inner one, placed between the walls and rows of trees was dark, melancholy and lonely, frequented only by misanthropes or amorous couples.

Of the city-gates, those of San Gallo, Croce and Prato still exist, isolated in the middle of modern

squares, when the hand of destruction has spared them, as monuments to record their historic past.

The other gates disappeared in the general demolition, and lovers of the beautiful still regret the picturesque and singular tower of the Porta Pinti surrounded by its groups of dark and ancient cypresses.

Another picturesque gate was the Porta Guelfa which had much the same character as the Porta San Niccolò.

Of the other towers and bastions there only remain the tower of the Zecca Vecchia, near the upper suspension bridge over the Arno, now reduced to a shapeless mass, and a small tower completely restored and modernised, near the entrance to the Cascine, on the side of the Porta Prato.

The bastions of the Fortress da Basso, in great part hidden by the raised ground, the picturesque towers of the « Four Corners » between Porta Croce and Porta Pinti, the old gate of San Sebastian, the singular tower of Maglio, which served to raise the waters for the public fountains, have all disappeared together with the city walls where clung the ivy and the beautiful Florentine lily grew in purple and lilac masses.

What pages of history, what spectacles and what deeds are recalled by those walls and city-gates!

For century after century, sentries paced their rounds on the battlements, while in the towers were gathered companies of the town militia.

During dark nights of danger the alarum was so-

unded from tower to tower and signals were transmitted with flags by day and with torches by night from these towers to fortresses unto the extreme limits of the Florentine State.

How often had those gates been opened to festively welcome the city militia, victoriously returning, illustrious strangers, or distinguished citizens, or had been hurriedly closed behind the fleeing remnants of a defeated soldiery!

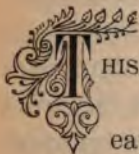
These walls and towers are now razed to the ground, only their foundations remain, buried in oblivion, and over their ruins, which recall such historic memories the people of today hastily pass in electric trams or swift carriages, by the broad boulevards which, bathed in sunshine and lined by rows of bright coloured edifices and expanding trees form a striking contrast to the melancholy, deformed masses of the demolished walls which for so many centuries had defended and enclosed Florence in a circle of stone.



CHAPTER IV.

THE ENLARGED STREETS.

Via Buja (Dark Street).



HIS name fitted it to perfection.

The very high buildings, with projecting eaves which almost touched each other, were so near that seen from afar the street appeared like a long fissure and once inside only a narrow strip of sky was visible.

The street had received its name by popular baptism, but was anciently called Via Bertinella or Albertinella, after the families of that name who long ago owned houses there.

Today it is a part of the Via dell' Orivolo, which received its name on account of the first clock for the Palazzo Vecchio being made in a house here, where also lived the famous Lorenzo Volpaia, a celebrated savant in all mechanical art.

Via Buja was widened by demolishing the houses facing the north, while on the opposite side, the buildings were modified in the style of the side of a Strozzi palace, formerly Guadagni and Riccardi.

In building this palace, one of the most important constructions of Gherardo Silvani, there was absorbed a palazzetto of the Arrigucci, and houses belonging to the Bischeri, Falconieri, Rinuccini, &c.

On the opposite corner of Via Proconsolo, were houses belonging to the Bischeri family, from which was derived the name of « Corner of the Bischeri », besides others belonging to the Cennamelli, Buonafedi, Falconieri and Pazzi families.

On the site of the present Banca Nazionale, designed by Cipolla, was the Pazzi garden, situated at the back of that family's historic palace in the Borgo degli Albizzi. A high wall separated it from the street and in the middle was a great gate, with a beautiful porch said to have been designed by Donatello which is now preserved in the National Museum at the Bargello.

It is a legend of the time that from this porch the conspirators who were to assassinate Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici sallied forth, an event known to history as the Conspiracy of the Pazzi.

Via de' Cerretani.

This broad, beautiful street, ornamented with handsome shops, now one of the finest in Florence, was

anciently divided into three parts of different width, all bearing separate names.

From Piazza del Duomo to the corner of Piazza dell'Olio and the Via della Forca, the street was the same size as now, and was called Via de' Marignolli, because this old and powerful family originally from the hills of Marignolle above Bellosguardo, owned a large palace and other houses that extended to Borgo San Lorenzo.

Houses and towers are now absorbed in modern houses, but up to a few years ago, the high and narrow doorways of the tower, bearing on the keystones of their arches the family coat of arms, were distinctly visible.

This portion of the street was also commonly known as the Canto alla Paglia (Straw Corner) because formerly the straw market was held here and the straw merchants had their shops in the Archbishop's palace opposite.

Next to the house of the Marignolli were the possessions of the Rondinelli, who gave their name to the street now known as Via della Forca, because, uniting with the Via dei Conti, it formed the letter Y and has thence been called the « Street of the Fork ».

The second portion of the street between Via della Forca and Via dei Conti, bore also this latter name after the Conti family who came to Florence from Cerreto, and owned all the buildings in this portion of the street.

They projected far into the street towards the south,

thus making one of the principal arteries of the city narrow and inconvenient, and their removal, one of the first alterations of the old city, was also one of the most proper and necessary.

The palace of the Cerretani, had a loggia at its corner, and was next to several houses of ancient families belonging to the Gaddi, Scodellari and Cappelli, all were afterwards united in one group of buildings where Archbishop Tommaso della Gherardesca founded a seminary in 1734, but the accomodation being insufficient it was transferred to the old monastery of the Cistercensi, next to the Church of Cestello in Borgo San Frediano, in 1784.

The establishment of Via de' Cerretani was sold to private owners and used as a hotel until the widening of the street, when other houses were pulled down or remodelled between the Via dei Conti and Via Panzani.

They belonged to two prominent Florentine families, the Cappelli and the Carnesecchi.

This part of the street had no particular name, but was known as the Corner of the Carnesecchi on account of the many houses owned in the neighborhood by that family.

The meeting of the different streets formed a small square in the centre of which Giambologna's group of Hercules killing the Centaur was placed, until its removal to the base of the Rossi tower at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, and its definite installation in its present position under the Loggia of the Piazza Signoria in 1838.

In Via Cerretani, among the most noteworthy buildings, is a very old palace of stone in pure Tuscan style of the 14th century at the corner of the Piazza dell'Olio.

Since the 15th century it has belonged to the Martelli family, but originally was the property of the Del Bambos afterwards the Bezzoli.

Tradition says that Arnolfo di Cambio, architect of the Duomo, lived in this palace and that Brunellesco designed one of the windows on the side of the Piazza dell'Olio.

The palace was used as the Hotel Aquila from the earliest days. Another hotel, one of the oldest in Florence, popularly known as Albergo San Luigino, was situated on the opposite side of the street and was also owned by the Martelli since the 16th century, but previous to that had been the property of the Cortigiani, whose arms are on the façade.

Of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the most ancient and beautiful for its architectural merits, we shall speak in another chapter, merely expressing the hope that its exterior may be repaired and embellished in a manner worthy the beauty of its interior.

Of quite modern construction is the vast palace, now Franchetti, which the people called the « Palace of the hundred windows » which was built when the Manovelli's, who built the principal doorway of Santa Maria Maggiore, owned various houses.

Via de' Gondi.

The street which skirts the north side of Palazzo Vecchio was in old times called Via delle Prestanze, from the title of certain public offices situated therein; it was afterwards baptized in its present name, when Giuliano Gondi bought a group of old buildings and erected on their site the splendid Gondi palace, designed by Giuliano di San Gallo.

This palace was only partly finished and its façade remained on the Piazza San Firenze until early in this generation, a mass of old irregular buildings of the 16th century, when the Gondi family took the opportunity of completing their palace, repeating its façade on the side of the Palazzo Vecchio, under the direction of the celebrated architect, Giuseppe Poggi, thus making this palace today one of the most beautiful specimens of pure Tuscan architecture in the city.

The Gondi palace, which was begun towards the end of the 15th century was thus finished by the same family only a few years ago.

To widen the street it was necessary to narrow the façade of an interesting old palace at the corner of the Piazza Signoria which formerly contained the Tribunals of the Merchants' Guilds.

In fact on its façade, notwithstanding the ravages of time, may be still discerned the coats of arms of the seven major and fourteen minor corporations of the arts and crafts.

Above the entrance is a sculptured figure of the Almighty in the act of benediction.

Besides its external beauties of pure and characteristic Florentine style, this palace contained halls, ornamented with frescoes of considerable beauty, and the most celebrated pupils of Giotto.

In the alterations made necessary by tearing down a part of the edifice for widening Via Gondi a number of Gaddi's frescoes were brought to light, and an effort for their preservation was made by some lovers of the artistic and beautiful.

But the moment was not propitious for such advanced ideas, and in the feverish hurry to destroy enlarge and modernize the city, the most elementary deference to the claims of art was forgotten, and the newly discovered frescoes of Gaddi again disappeared under plaster and whitewash and.... « no more was said about it ».

Via de' Martelli.

The enlargement of Via de' Martelli was necessary to open a more convenient means of transit between Piazza del Duomo and Via Cavour, formerly Via Larga, as this street, in its original proportions, was narrow and inconvenient.

In the earliest days, it was a suburb of the city outside the walls as they existed at the end of the 13th century, and, on account of the makers of swords having their work-shops here, it was called Borgo

degli Spadai and a secondary or postern gate was always open in times of peace to maintain communication with the city.

The walls having been destroyed and extended to the outskirts, this suburb became Via degli Spadai (sword-makers) which was changed to Via dei Martelli when the family of that name, originally from the Mugello, built their palace and houses on the sites formerly occupied by the sword-makers.

This family owned houses on both sides of the street but the largest and most important were on the western side, especially N.º 9, which has a bust of Cosimo I over the door and was for a long time the residence of the Martelli.

Donatello, the great sculptor of the Florentine renaissance of the 15th century, was associated with the memories of this house having in his early days been patronized and encouraged by Roberto Martelli, in whom he found a faithful and affectionate friend and for whom he executed some of his finest works, — the statues of San Giovanni Battista, David and San Giovannino, which are now preserved in the family's palace in Via della Forca.

Donatello's studio was situated in the house of Via Martelli. Several houses of the Martelli and Ciampelli became, in 1580 incorporated in the Convent of San Giovanni Evangelista which Bartolommeo Ammannati rebuilt for the Jesuits, to whom the church of San Giovanni had been ceded three years previously.

The façade of this convent, to which the Scolopi

fathers were transferred in 1775 and now occupied by public schools, has no artistic merit, but at the side of the door the amateur cannot fail to be struck by the beauty of a marble bas-relief, representing a Madonna and Child, very much in the style of Desiderio of Settignano.

On this side of the street, many houses bore the insignia of the Merchants' Guild, and their property was administered by the Consuls of that body, to whom also was entrusted the management of the funds of San Giovanni Battista hospital, which lay between Piazza San Giovanni and Via Martelli.

When this hospital was suppressed its possessions were assigned to the Church of San Giovanni but always under the management of the Merchants' Guild.

The palace, now called Modigliani, was part of the property of the Church of San Giovanni and was taken at a quit-rent from the Martelli family.

On the opposite side of the street were palaces and houses whose façades were demolished when the street was widened.

The most important, architecturally, was the palace at the corner of the Piazza del Duomo ornamented with stone carving in the style of the 17th century.

It was built by the Martelli on the site of various small houses and from the Martelli passed to Narvaez y Saavedra, a Spanish family which came to Florence with Eleonora of Toledo.

The other houses belonged to the Lorini, whose

property extended into Piazza del Duomo and Via del Cocomero, now Via Ricasoli, and to the Medici, Infangati, Cini, Ubaldini and Biffi.

After the Biffi, who were originally veil manufacturers of Bergamo, the street which led from Via Martelli to Via Ricasoli was named; before that it was called Via Malborghetto.

Via de' Panzani.

The necessity of opening communication with the railway station and the centre of Florence naturally brought about the widening of this street which was formerly inconveniently narrow.

Two parts of the street had anciently different names,

Between Piazza Vecchia of Santa Maria Novella and the corner of Via del Giglio it was called Via de' Cenni, after an old family who owned houses there; the rest was called Via Panzano or Via de' Panzani, merging into the Corner of the Carnesecchi; already spoken of in describing the Via Cerretani.

The widening of this street did not require the destruction of any palace of importance.

The houses demolished belonged to the Carnesecchi, Lapi, Gimignani, Bertinelli, Fiorini, Sogliani and others.

At the corner of Piazza Vecchia of Santa Maria Novella, where the magnificent palace of the Carrega-Bartolini family, Princes of Lucedio, was built, were a number of small houses belonging to the Buoninsegni, Buontalenti and the monks of Santa Maria Novella.

When the street was widened, the façade of the old palace once owned by the Venturi, Bischeri and Doni, lately occupied by the Bank of Naples, was also restored.

On the corner forming the angle of the Via Panzani and Via dei Banchi there was formerly a small church dedicated to San Giuseppe and belonging to the craft of the Woodworkers.

Via Porta Rossa.

This is the latest of the important streets widened and is not yet finished.

But this street, which took its name from a gate in the second line of the walls of Florence and that had become the emblem of the Silk Guild, whose shops occupied the neighborhood, has only been irregularly and partially enlarged.

Narrow and crooked streets flanked by high towers and grim palaces faced with stone were characteristic of the Middle Ages.

Today only one of these medioeval palaces exists, but it is one of the most beautiful and important of Florence, built by the Davizi and for more than three centuries the property of the Davanzati.

It is one of the most typical and complete examples of Florentine architecture of the period between the 14th and 15th centuries and must add to the merits of its façade the beauty of its original courtyard.

Of a later epoch, but of the highest artistic merit,

are the façades of the two Bartolini-Salimbeni palaces; the one facing the Piazza Santa Trinita may be considered as the example and first attempt of a new style, which substituted the flat architrave for the arch in the windows, an attempt which brought on its author, Baccio d'Agnolo, universal disapproval and hostile criticism; the other, with its façade built on projecting buttresses united by small arches of graceful shape, was in the prevalent stile of the period and was also designed by Baccio.

The first of these palaces, now Hôtel du Nord, was built on the site of houses formerly belonging to the Soldanieri and Squarciasacchi; the second, which is now Hôtel Porta Rossa, originally belonged to the Monaldi, and its massive tower called the Rognosa, still rears its solid walls high up above the old palace.

On the opposite side of the street, the demolitions were carried as far as a gigantic tower, called the tower of the Foresi, which although cut down is still very high and preserves its ancient style of door and windows.

There still remain, for a few days only we may say, two small palaces of undeniable artistic merit one of which has the characteristic type of house of the 14th century, with semi-circular arched windows and foundation resting on projecting cornices sustained by stone brackets and arches.

This belonged to the Cocchi-Compagni family, by whom it was left as a legacy to the Captains of Or San Michele.

The other is of greater importance, because only one house of the period, of similar design but smaller exists, which was in the Vicolo of the Davanzati now suppressed; its windows are divided into two narrow arches, with little pillars without capitals on each side.

This was the oldest palace of the Davanzati.

The gigantic tower on the same side, recently demolished, belonged to the Cosi, afterwards to the Guggielmi silk merchants.

Between Pellicceria and Calimala there was a group of buildings of very solid construction and similar type, some existing until lately; others ruined and altered to suit modern requirements.

They comprised palaces and houses and among them, in a comparatively small area, rose no less than six towers; palaces and towers belonged to the Cavalcanti, Siminetti, Bostichi, Benzi, della Sannella and Nobili.

Of the towers, that of the Siminetti was placed opposite the Mercato Nuovo, while the others rose up from the mass of those narrow intricate, crooked passages that traversed these blocks of old buildings.

Now of all these ancient edifices, against whose massive walls the demolisher's pick-axes and crowbars have been continually battering for months and years, except a few photographs and drawings by the communal committee, there remains only the memory.

Via Tornabuoni.

Formerly only a very small portion of this street now lined by magnificent palaces and containing the richest shops of the town, was known as Via Tornabuoni.

The portion between Piazza Antinori and Palazzo Strozzi, consisting of houses belonging to the Tornabuoni and other families of the League of the Tornabuinci, was the only part bearing the name.

The tract from Palazzo dei Legnaioli, from the number of wood carvers occupying work shops there, and the rest was popularly known as the Stradone di Santa Trinita, from being the broadest street of the city, which often served for public meetings and military reviews.

It was also a favourite resort for fêtes, games and jousts, especially that known as the Saraceno.

Latterly some of the palaces bordering the street have undergone noteworthy transformation, but the imposing and artistic appearance which the Stradone di Santa Trinita presented in the 16th century may be easily conceived from what remains intact today.

Towards the bridge, it was like a bit of the Middle Ages; on one side was the palace of the Spini (lately occupied on the ground floor by Vieusseux's library and now by French's bank, Lemon & C.^o and the British Consulate) an imposing, fortress-like pile, whose solid walls and battlements protected all the descen-

dants of this family, formerly one of the richest and most powerful in Florence.

A picturesque tower rose from the bed of the river near the Santa Trinita bridge, connected with the palace by a stone arch thrown over the Lung'Arno, but the demands of public circulation necessitated its demolition.

On the ground floor, protected by a long roof were numerous ware-houses, many being used by the Spini in their business.

On the opposite side were the palaces of the Gianfigliuzzi which ran along the river on one side, and on the other extended to the palace or tower belonging to the Fastelli or Pietriboni, next to the church of Santa Trinita. The church of Santa Trinita still preserved its original plain stone façade in Roman style, with columns exactly as represented by Ghirlandajo in the Sassetti chapel, for the modern genius of reform had not yet disfigured its fine lines with a barocco façade of stone or marble.

On the piazza in front of the church, two palaces formed a strong contrast one to the other; one of them grand and simple in its architectural lines belonged to the Scali, afterwards the Buondelmonti and now the Adami, the other, that designed by Baccio d'Agnolo for the Bartolini-Salimbeni, of a new type in those days, of great beauty and rich ornamentation, is now occupied by the Hôtel du Nord.

The Via Tornabuoni between Piazza Trinita and the Corner of the Tornaquinci and Strozzi palace was no less rich in sumptuous palaces.

The imposing and severe palace of the Minerbetti, built and for a long time inhabited by the extinct Bombeni family, and the lofty palace of Cambi del Nero, now Medici Tornaquinci, preserved as they do today, their solid, substantial and severe appearance of medioeval construction.

We will not describe the Strozzi palace, one of the finest and most important Florence, as it is such a magnificent specimen of architecture we should wrong our readers' intelligence in attempting to magnify its beauty, which is self-evident.

But the Strozzi's also owned at one time all the houses between their palace and Porta Rossa.

On this side, the Monaldi owned the palace now Barbolani da Montauto, occupied by the Club, the Del Vigna, that now Niccolini Alamanni, while the Rucellai and Popoleschi all owned property here.

The meeting of the five streets, at the corner of the Strozzi palace on one side and the Vigna Nuova on the other, formed a sort of *piazza*, which being surrounded by families belonging to the League of the Tornaquinci, bore this name; on the corner of the Palazzo Corsi, then Tornabuoni, was a beautiful *loggia* (covered balcony), owned in common by all the families of the League and occupied by them as a favorite place of social resort.

This loggia was destroyed and made smaller, but of beautiful proportions, by Lodovico Cardi da Cigoli and round the frieze below its roof were the coats

of arms of all the families that belonged to the league the Tornaquinci, Tornabuoni, Popoleschi, Giachinotti, Cardinali and Marabottini.

When the Corsi palace had to be partially destroyed in our times for widening the street, this *loggia* was exactly reproduced on the opposite corner near the church of San Gaetano, over Alinari's photograph shop, together with its interesting frieze of the Tornaquinci League's coats of arms.

A small oratory was situated on the corner of the palace, formerly Rucellai, that lay between Via della Vigna Nuova and Via della Spada, and when this was demolished for convenience of public circulation, only a very beautiful tabernacle of graceful shape and artistic merit, was preserved on the walls.

The handsome palace of the Tornabuoni, designed by Michelozzi, companion and friend of Donatello, and built in the 15th century, extended from the corner of Via degli Strozzi to the church of San Gaetano.

From the Tornabuoni it passed to the Ridolfi and then to the Corsi, who owned it when the façade had to be destroyed to widen the street, but reconstructed with a new façade by Telemaco Buonaiuti, it is now one of the most perfect palaces, architecturally, built in Florence this century.

The little palace on the corner of Piazza Antinori on the opposite side was a worthy neighbor of the Palazzo Tornabuoni, being designed by Antonio Dosi and built by the Giacomini in the 16th century.

It is considered one of the best specimens of Italian architecture of the *cinquecento*.

All the other houses in the street, from the earliest times belonged to the League of the Tornaquinci.

In the palace which the Viviani della Robbia altered in the 17th century according to the designs of Giovan Battista Foggini, several houses belonging to the Bonaparte family, from whom sprung the branch of the Napoleon Bonaparte, were incorporated.



CHAPTER V.

ALONG THE ARNO

THE Arno in its long and winding course through fertile valleys and between wooded hills reflects in its waters the greatest variety of charming landscape and its banks are beautiful and picturesque.

But in Florence the superb embankments and the promenade of the « Lungarno » have rendered the river banks justly celebrated.

All the foreign poets and writers who in past times have descanted about the beauties, customs and attractions of Florence have invariably expressed their admiration for this superb promenade, bathed in sunshine and running along the river side in front of rows of stately palaces and handsome houses.

And this sentiment of admiration was just as strong fifty years ago, when the Lungarno was of very modest size in proportion to its present grandeur and its

hotels and houses were filled with strangers who sought this enchanting situation.

The most important portion, which lay between the Ponte Vecchio and the Ponte Carraia, was narrower and more crooked than now and terminated at a wall and gate which led into meadows and gardens called the Vagaloggia.

The Lungarno Corsini was the handsomest and most fashionable part and an especially favorite resort in the fine days of winter.

Between the Uffizi and the Piazza dei Cavalleggieri and the Ponte alle Grazie the Lungarno had a more modest appearance being almost entirely occupied by the dyers' establishments which occupied this quarter from the earliest days.

On the opposite side of the river the Lungarno Guicciardini was somewhat frequented in the summer on account of its shade, but from the Ponte Carraia to the Porta San Frediano there was only a country road used by carts and sand carriers.

The Lungarno Nuovo, now Amerigo Vespucci, was not then in existence although its utility as a means of uniting the park of the Cascine with the Lungarno in a direct line was recognized by all.

In the same manner the demands of circulation would remove all the houses on the river side of Via dei Bardi and Borgo San Jacopo to unite the Lungarno's Torrigiani and Guicciardini, but no one dreams of such an innovation on account of the expense.

On the right bank of the river there was not then

as now a broad, straight street several kilometers in length without interruption, but, at the same time, the circulation was much less, and the gay movement of carriages which makes the Florence « season » worthy of any European capital was much more limited.

Nowadays on Sundays and fête days hundreds of carriages pass in a double line between compact crowds the whole length of the river banks and far into the Cascine.

But present times are extraneous to our studies which should enable us to mentally reconstruct those portions which have disappeared long ago, and for this we will confine our observations to the parts of the Lungarno which lay within the old city walls.

The Arno, which in ancient times had neither solid nor regular embankments, was very broad in the plains of Rovezzano and the valley above, getting narrower as it approached Florence where the Ponte Vecchio marks its narrowest part.

This inequality and irregularity of its cours caused frequent inundations, and the destruction of bridges mills and houses, and the floods sometimes assumed disastrous proportions.

In ancient times, at the end of the moat under the walls was situated the Castle of Altafronte with its four towers, which later from a military post was converted into the peaceful residence of the Castellani family.

When the new walls were built the works of defence on the river were strengthened and enlarged,

and besides the watch towers all the landing places on the river were defended by postern gates.

The royal tower which was the outermost point of defence was connected with a number of small towers called Torricelle on the river bank behind the street which led to the Porta della Giustizia, also named after the towers, Via Torricelle.

On the opposite side of the river the lofty and massive tower of San Niccolò formed the principal defence, together with a number of small towers which enclosed the mills at the dam of San Niccolò.

The military defences were nearly all concentrated at the upper end of the city as being more accessible to attack on account of the river current, and many of them existed until the demolitions of our times destroyed all but the great tower of San Niccolò.

The other postern gates on the river were that of the Tiratoi where the Piazza Giudici now is, the porticciola of the mill of Borgognissanti near the dam at the side of the Grand Hotel, and another postern on the opposite side of the river in the wall extending from Porta San Frediano to the bank, which still exists but is walled up.

In the old days the water power of the two dams of San Miniato and Borgognissanti was utilised for a number of mills within the city walls.

No trace of them remains today although they were rich in historical associations and presented a characteristic and picturesque appearance.

Near the San Miniato gate was a group of mills

belonging to the Monks of San Miniato, since the 13th century.

After having served these mills, the water passed into a canal whence it gave power to the more important mills of the Renai and San Gregorio.

These mills were built under the direction of Giovanni Pisani and completed by Taddeo Gaddi in 1340.

Gaddi filled up two arches of the Ponte Rubaconte for the use of these mills and surrounded them with a high and solid wall in which was a gate, surmounted by a large porch, which connected it with the Renai mills.

These latter, of very antique and picturesque appearance, existed until the construction of the new Lungarno Serristori, which was built exactly over the canal which fed the water-wheels.

There was also a mill near the Corso dei Tintori and another before the Castle of Altafronte, whose foundations may be seen today in front of the Piazza dei Giudici.

They were demolished, after having been several times damaged by floods, on account of impeding the course of the river in the narrowest part.

Still older than the mills of the Renai were those of Ognissanti built in the 13th century by the Tornabuini and Frescobaldi families on the so-called island of Ognissanti which lay between the canal and the river.

In the next century the greater part of these mills were bought by the Frati Umiliati, an order which most

effectively contributed to the development of Florentine commerce.

This order came from Milan in 1251, first settling in San Donato at Polverosa, afterwards at Santa Lucia and finally in Ognissanti, the land on which their church was built being given by the Tornaquinci.

This brotherhood, besides their religious work were interested in developing industrial pursuits and in Florence initiated wool manufacture, employing for this purpose the water power of the mills at Ognissanti.

Their profits were mostly spent in charity and useful public works, and they built the Church of Ognissanti and the Carraia bridge.

Giovanni dei Medici feared the increasing influence of this active, liberal, popular and industrious body and expelled them from the convent and church they had built, replacing them by the order of Minori Osservanti, and from that day their valuable influence and work ceased.

The mills of Ognissanti passed into the hands of different owners but the majority became the property of the Medici together with the adjacent lands, called the Vagaloggia, where a most beautiful garden was laid out, but in later days this garden became a wilderness of weeds and briars although the mills still remained almost exactly as in their primitive days.

They were all outside the city walls but surrounded with defences which were connected with the walls and the city by a postern gate called the Porticciola delle Mulina.



THE ARNO FROM VIA DELLE TORRICELLE.



Mills, mill-race, canal, the meadows of the Vagaloggia, the postern gate and walls have all disappeared and are replaced by the most beautiful and fashionable quarter of Florence.

The Lungarno, which was then called new and now bears the name of Amerigo Vespucci, the celebrated Florentine whose palace was situated in Borgo Ognissanti, where the hospital of the Fate Bene Fratelli now is, was made by converting the Ricasoli gardens at the foot of the Carraia bridge into a street together with other gardens at the back of houses on the Borgognissanti, the meadows of the Vagaloggia, and the vacant lands outside the walls, thus connecting the Cascine with the centre of the city by a direct and handsome road along the river banks.

There were no houses in this quarter therefore the demolition was limited to the destruction of the mills and the Gate of the Muline.

Instead, this Lungarno of the Zecca Vecchia at the upper end of the city necessitated the destruction of a number of small towers on the river bank to the rear of the houses on Via Torricelle.

These towers were intended, as already said, to defend the city from a water attack and were like so many sentries on the wall which ran from the city walls behind the houses on the river to the Piazza Cavalleggieri, so called from the cavalry barracks situated there.

The houses in Via Torricelle belonged partly to religious bodies and partly to the trade guilds, especially

woollen guild. There were two monasteries, one that of San Girolamo delle Poverine, now soldiers' barracks and the other San Jacopo and San Filippo, called the Ceppo of the seven charities of the Misericordia.

This last was originally a hospital where the nuns of San Miniato al Monte took refuge during the great siege. In 1557 a terrible flood destroyed the building, and the nuns were transferred to the church of San Dionisio in Via San Gallo.

Partly rebuilt, it again became a hospital dedicated to Santa Dorotea, and was the first hospital for the care of the insane, serving for this purpose until 1787.

Its site is now occupied by the Parenti establishment. In continuation of the Lungarno of the Zecca Vecchia is the Lungarno del Tempio, named after the church of the Tempio, where the Chapter of the Tempio brought condemned criminals previous to their execution.

The Lungarno Archibusieri has also been altered but for the better. It was formerly an interior street bordered on one side by high palaces once belonging to the Castellani, Girolami, Cennini, Nardi, &c., and on the other by low shops filling up the arches which supported the passage way, connecting the Uffizi and Pitti palaces, built by Giorgio Vasari.

The shops were built out on brackets and props over the Arno, but when the flood of 1864 threatened to carry them away, it was decided to destroy them and open the arches, by which a graceful and convenient colonnade has now been formed on the river's bank. On the opposite side of the river three bits of

embankment were newly built called the Lungarni Torrigiani, Serristori and Cellini.

To make the Lungarno Torrigiani, the meadows at the side of the palace of that name, known as the Prato del Barone, were converted into a broad street, the ground was filled up at the back of the house in Via dei Bardi, and many houses at the foot of the Costa de' Magnoli, opposite the palace of the Tempi, late Vettori, were demolished.

Amongst the edifices destroyed was the church of Santa Maria Sopr'Arno, one of the most ancient parishes in Florence, and several houses owned in former times by the Bardi, Marucelli, Guidetti and Corsellini.

One of these houses was owned and occupied by Vespasiano Bisticci a well known librarian and literary man.

The Lungarno Serristori occupied that portion over the old mill race, a part of the gardens of the Serristori palace, built by Messer Averardo, Bishop of Bitetto, and naturally all the mills already described, built by Giovanni Pisano and Taddeo Gaddi, had to disappear.

The Lungarno Cellini occupied the space where the canal came from the Arno, and the mills of the San Miniato monks had to make way for this new street together with that portion of the old wall which connected the gate of San Miniato with the river.

The Arno, running through the city, greatly added to its appearance and opened a current of air and light in the midst of its crowded palaces and houses, but at the same time it was a perpetual menace on

account of the danger of inundation from floods owing to many parts of the town being low, and the defective system of drains leading into the river.

The Arno is, however, no longer a source of danger, but only a thing of beauty and admiration, crossed by some of the most graceful bridges in the world and reflecting rows of old picturesque houses, arched bridges and glorious sunsets in its placid waters.

Now protected by high embankments forming the Lungarni, with the drains carried away from the river to a point below the city there is no fear or possibility of those inundations which once wrought so much havoc and devastation.



CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD MINT.

A tower which now only consists of four stone walls, plain and undecorated, but which some day must have been much higher and surmounted by battlements, rises at the end of the Lungarno apposite the viale Carlo Alberto.

It is the sole remnant, the only souvenir of a number of ancient buildings which were situated in this position, and were known as the old mint (*Zecca Vecchia*).

Previous to the demolition of the walls the tower reared its massive proportions on the river bank in the midst of the ramparts of a dismantled fortress, near a mill race and buildings next the walls which at this point showed traces of a walled up gate.

The buildings next to the tower seemed a mixture of old and modern construction with large arched

rooms, long corridors and balconies overhanging the canal from the Arno which gave motive power to the wheels of various cloth mills.

These houses, which grouped en masse were of singular picturesqueness, completed the view of green banks and vine covered hills lining the river and were full of interesting historical associations.

A postern gate was situated here, flanked by a tower on the river bank to defend the city from a water attack; this was called the Gate of Justice, and its name calls up painful and melancholy memories. Outside the walls at the end of a meadow beyond the moat was a small low church whose façade was frescoed with sad subjects. In this meadow was placed the gallows and executionary scaffold. The Gate of Justice was generally closed for the better security of the city and was only thrown open for the passage of religious companies accompanying condemned criminals to the place of execution.

The street through which they passed to the gate was very appropriately known as Via Malcontenti, (Street of the discontented).

In 1346 criminals condemned to death were brought to a chapel, still in existence, next to the church of San Giuseppe in Via Malcontenti were tied to an iron ring which may still be seen in the pavement, but afterwards the little church outside the walls was built for this last grim service.

The church was used as a resting place where the penitent might offer his short and final prayer before being handed over to the executioner.

The victims' bodies remained suspended on the gallows for days in order to act as a wholesome warning to all evil disposed persons, but the Florentines, who must have their little joke even on the most solemn subjects, called these meadows which formerly belonged to the Nemi family, the *paretaio* of the Nemi (bird-catching place of the Nemi).

The gate of Justice was walled up during the great siege, and after that the lugubrious procession passed through the Porta alla Croce. In our times traces of this gate, partly buried in the raised soil, could still be seen previous to the destruction of the old walls and above it the hole through which every defensive missile might be hurled on attacking parties below.

The tower, which still stands, was originally 77 feet high and was called the Royal Tower.

It was erected to defend the end of a bridge which was begun but never finished; projected to cross the river at this point, indeed the tower partly rests on the pier which was to have supported the first arch.

Like the tower the bridge was to have been named the Royal Bridge in honor of King Roberto of Naples, a great friend of the Florentines and head of the Guelphs.

But owing to wars and revolutions the work begun in 1317 was interrupted and never continued, and only the tower remained which, connected with the city walls, added a valuable defence on the river side.

At the time of the great siege a provisional bastion with high remparts was built, and in 1532 Duke Alessandro, wishing to guarantee the city from any attack

in this direction, constructed a large and well-defended fortress, incorporating the Royal Tower and the little church previously mentioned, which had served for the last religious offices for the condemned.

This was generally called the *Fortezza Vecchia* or Old Fortress after the subsequent construction of the *Fortezza da Basso* and that of *San Giovanni Battista*.

The mill dam of *San Miniato* allowed the river to supply a long canal which gave motive power to a number of water-wheels, that later served to work the presses and machinery for coining money.

There is a record still existing which proves that in 1572 money was coined by water power, but there are also previous records showing that the *Coiners' Guild* had shops and mills in this quarter, which explains its name of the Old Mint.

The water wheels may still be seen under ground at the entrance of the canal which is now used to carry water through the city's main drain.

After peaceful times returned to Florence all the buildings about the Royal Tower were adapted for industrial purposes, but when the old walls were torn down to make the new boulevards all the ancient foundations that had become buried under the soil, were brought to light.

One could distinguish the shape of the gate the walls and bastions of the *Fortezza Vecchia*, the old moats, and on removing the earth which lay between the bastions, the little church of *Santa Croce al Tempio* on the meadow of the *Nemi* was found.

This edifice was of characteristic shape, and on

its façade buried for three centuries, could still be distinctly seen the frescoes of Spinello Aretino.

I remember perfectly the form of the chapel, the graceful shape of the door, and the peculiar impression caused by these frescoes, all referring to the Passion of Jesus Christ, which had received the last gaze of so many condemned criminals on the borderland of eternity!

These excavations were made at the period of greatest activity in demolishing all traces of old Florence at the time it had become the capital of the Kingdom, and no attention was paid to the claims of art, archeology or the preservation of historical monuments which at another time might have been cared for.

Therefore, although these frescoes were of the greatest historical interest, they disappeared together with the crumbling walls of the little church, and were carted off as so much dirt and rubbish to serve as part of the foundations of the present modern boulevard over which runs the electric tram, a striking anachronism to the grim tower of the Zecca Vecchia under whose shadow it passes every few minutes with clanging gong.

Of all this ancient quarter once bristling with fortified walls and battlemented towers, and later, active with industrial life, the whirring of looms and splashing of water wheels, there remains but this one solitary, mutilated tower, like a monument marking the tomb of the past, where the Gate of Justice, the Old Fortress and the unfinished Royal Bridge lie buried in oblivion.



THE BRIDGE OF THE GRACES.



SANTA CROCE WITHOUT THE MODERN FAÇADE.





CHAPTER VII.

PONTE ALLE GRAZIE.

OF the four bridges in masonry which cross the Arno the Ponte alle Grazie is the only one which has been able to resist the force of the floods and the shock of floating material brought down by the river.

The other three, overcome by the force of water or shaken by the blows of timber carried off from the banks have more than once given way and fallen into the whirling current.

The Ponte alle Grazie was the first bridge to receive the full force of the current and also the first to offer any resistance to floating masses, but the strength of its foundations and stone-work and its greater length enabled it to preserve its original piers and arches of 1237 down to our days.

I cannot say that it has kept its original appearance, however, which is very different from that of thirty

years ago, and still more changed from that of the first century of its existence.

Today it has six arches of two sizes; the three on the right being narrower than those on the left, but originally there were nine arches, and those now massing were of the same size as the smaller ones.

When this bridge was built Messer Rubaconte di Mandella, a Milanese, was Potestà of Florence and the Florentines named the bridge Rubaconte in his honor, which name it retained until the end of the next century, when a little church containing a tabernacle of the Madonna delle Grazie was built at one end and from this picture the bridge took its present name.

The history of the Ponte alle Grazie recalls a number of important historical events but I will only mention one, the celebration of peace between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, arranged by Pope Gregory X on his journey through Florence to the Council of Lyons.

At the end of July 1273 the Florentines assembled on the banks of the Arno, which at this point broadened into a sort of lake, to witness the Pope who, followed by his Court and accompanied by King Charles of Naples and the Emperor Baldovino of Constantinople with their imposing retinues, appeared on the middle of the bridge, blessed the crowd and obliged the opposing parties to kiss and embrace, subsequently ending the ceremonies of the day by laying the corner stone of a church called San Gregorio della Pace.

The impression produced by the magnificence of this solemn function and the manner in which it took

place remained for a long time, and the church of San Gregory of Peace existed for many centuries even to our own time; but the peace which it was intended to commemorate lasted exactly four days, after which Florence again became divided by the quarrels and fights of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions and Pope Gregory discouraged and mortified, left the city.

Of the nine arches which crossed this broad part of the river, two were filled up in 1340 when the mill was built, thus narrowing the bed of the Arno, while the third arch allowed the passage of the mill-stream.

The filled-up arches were subsequently used as cellars and ware-houses for the houses that the Benci and Banchi families built on the site now occupied by the two superb Torrigiani palaces.

The bridge of the Graces, simple as it was with its piers and arches of plain, strong stone, without ornaments or carving of any sort, still had an individual character and a peculiarly picturesque appearance, produced by the small houses built on each of its piers.

In our days, with the exception of the little church of the Madonna delle Grazie situated on the bank opposite the Palazzo Alberti and the chapel of Santa Maria della Carità at the other end of the bridge, all the houses were ugly little constructions projecting over the piers on stanchions and brackets.

They were mean little dwellings of few small rooms in which poor families huddled together, and persons

Alberti family, then of great power and wealth, assumed the patronage of the church, which it endowed and maintained from the next century until the present.

The little chapel was often enlarged and decorated, and in 1710 a small cupola was added together with a number of paintings by Soderini.

The widening of the bridge during the last thirty years necessitated the removal of this interesting oratory which was rebuilt by the Alberti family next to their palace on the Lungarno.

Besides the chapels, other edifices worthy of note were situated on the piers of the bridge.

On the first pier to the right, in a modest habitation lived Benedetto Menzini, a satirical poet of great reputation, who died March 29th 1647.

In another small house lived Beato Tommaso Bellati, francescano, for many years, and in still another built on an pier called the Scorpione, I have found record of the existence of a certain Baldassarre di Folco, broker.

In this manner, I have been able to record the history of the numerous houses so picturesquely perched on the piers of the bridge, which some thirty years ago had to be destroyed in order to give place for a foot-way on either side, thrown from pier to pier and sustained by projecting iron stanchions.

In ancient times the river sides at the end of the bridge were occupied by old edifices belonging to well-known families such as the Da Volognano, Da Quona and the Fagni on the right side where the Al-

berti palaces now are, while on the opposite side were the houses of the Nasi and Benci, subsequently incorporated in the palazzo del Nero.

Between the Arno and the mill-stream the city wall was surmounted by a sort of roadway, which starting from the end of the bridge led into the shady gardens of the Serristori palace.

Today the Ponte alle Grazie is the most convenient of all the city bridges, broad, level, allowing the passage of a tram line, and with ample foot-ways from which the pedestrian can contemplate the splendid panorama of hills and mountains which lay to the West over which the setting sun offers one of the most attractive and picturesque spectacles it is possible to conceive.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE FULLING MILLS (I TIRATOI).

THESE strange, almost indescribable structures were indeed symbols as well as records of a commerce and industry so deeply connected with Florence that we must endeavour to describe them. It was principally with the industry in wool (*Arte della Lana*) that such great wealth was accumulated by the Republic, and therefore the many Fulling mills (*Tiratoj*) that existed had great local significance, and cannot be passed in silence. They existed in all the quarters of the town; colossal and weird structures on a wide stone base, or foundation, and surmounted by a gigantic roof under which a labyrinth of stakes, masts, crochets, beams and cross-beams, terraces, staircases and passages all of wood, formed a totality of the strangest aspect. These « *Tiratoj* » were more especially used for fulling and drying the wool,

while the Gualchiere (water-mills) on the Arno outside the town were used for washing and wringing the woollen material. These Tiratoj and Gualchiere belonged either to the families interested in this industry or to guilds called Arte, and principally to the Arte della Lana e dei Tintori (dyers). The number and size of these immense structures in which thousands of yards of cloth and countless skeins of raw material could be hung, give an idea of the importance of this trade in Florence. The art of the wool was certainly one of the important factors of the Republic's wealth, and it caused rivers of gold to flow into its money chests. The galleys with the Florence oriflamme swept the seas for our merchants who had houses and representatives in the furthest ports of Europe and Asia.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, almost half of the population was engaged in this commerce, and looking through the old archives and records we find the names of the noblest families as proprietors of fulling mills; members of the aristocracy occupying high state positions, and receivers of honours and rewards from foreign princes did not disdain to treat in affairs, direct banks and work in commerce besides travelling abroad to sell their goods and increase their connections.

From the old chronicles we gather that at the beginning of the 15th century in a population of 95,000 inhabitants, 30,000 belonged to the Guild of Wool; 200 deposits for selling woollen cloth existed in Florence, and every year about 75,000 bales of woollen cloth were fulled. From this followed the necessity of

the many and vast « Tiratoj » which existed in every part of the town, but more especially near to the Arno. And I will now enumerate some of the principal ones.

Tiratojo dell'Aquila - between Via dei Servi, Via del Castellaccio and Via degli Alfani, belonging partly to the Guild of Wool, partly to that of the Merchants whose coats of arms - an eagle with out spread wings clutching at a bale of goods - gave the name. In 1427 it belonged to Messer Palla di Noferi Strozzi a great and illustrious citizen. At the end of the 15th century, when the Florentine commerce was in its decline, this building was demolished, and in its place houses were built. The shields with emblems of the two Guilds are still to be seen on their walls.

Tiratojo dell'Agnolo - near Porta Romana, in the parish of San Pier Gattolino, belonged to the Castellani family.

Tiratojo degli Angioli - in Via degli Alfani, opposite the church and convent of the Camaldoli friars called degli Angioli. It belonged to the Guild of Wool, but also in part, to the monks of Camaldoli, and it extended as far as Via della Pergola. This locality was formerly called Canto alla Catena (of the chain), from the coat of arms of the Alberti family to whom the land belonged.

Tiratojo del Cavallo - was also near the Via Romana and San Pier Gattolino, and belonged to the Ridolfi and Mannelli, both families being of the Arte della Lana.

Tiratojo delle Convertite - near to the church of the Converted in Via Chiara, now Via de' Serragli.

Tiratojo dei Falconieri – back of the Duomo, between Via dei Servi and the former Palazzo Guadagni.

Tiratojo della Pergola – built in the midst of orchards between Via Sant'Egidio and Via dei Pinti, where in a later epoch the beautiful theatre bearing now the name of Pergola was built.

Many other Tiratoj existed at that same time in Florence, such as those of the Albizzi, of the Arno, of the Colonna, of the Leone, of the Maestruzzo, of the Scala, of the Uccello, – but with the decline of this particular commerce which had long since fallen from its apogee of fame, many of these edifices became useless, and after remaining for years abandoned and neglected, were destroyed to make room for new constructions, and there only existed in our time two: the Tiratojo dell'Arno and the one of the Uccello. — The former was demolished when the Palace of the Bourse was built; the latter caught fire and was reduced to ashes twenty-five years ago. The Tiratojo of the Arno, called also of the Castellani, served as well for the Dyers (Tintori) who had always worked near the Arno in that part of the town. With its irregular and almost fantastic mass of structure, this Tiratojo on the bank of the river formed a most picturesque picture, flanked on one side by the Palazzo de' Giudici formed from a part of the Castle of Altafronte one of the fortifications of the city, and on the other by the old trench or moat of the city walls of the second circle (secondo cerchio). Around it, on the bank, the tiny houses, sheds and shops of the Dyers (Tintori) and Soap-boilers (Saponai),



THE TIRATOJO AND POSTERN-GATE ON THE ARNO.



and in front, on the river-side, a dock protected by a fortified postern-gate called Porticciola delle Travi beams).

Piazza delle Travi, the piazza now called Arno and which then served as a deposit for all the beams, stakes, runks of trees, which the many rafts brought down from the Casentino. All this wood was sawn and worked in this piazza, also for the Guild of the Carpenters (legnajoli) who had their offices in the near by Via della Mosca.

The Porticciola d'Arno was generally kept closed in olden times for reasons of military defence; in more recent times on account of the smugglers. This postern gate was destroyed contemporarily with the Piratojo d'Arno.

In the parish of San Frediano, in the site of the Piratojo dell'Uccello, destroyed by fire, a modern one was built; but it has nothing in its construction that reminds one of the old and singular structures of the past.



CHAPTER IX.

THE VERANDAH OF THE PISANS.

THIS long and broad roof, sustained by heavy brackets and stanchions, juttet out from a shapeless and irregular mass of buildings opposite the Palazzo Vecchio on a site now occupied by a handsome palace in the style of the 15th century formerly well know to strangers as the seat of the Fenzi bank.

The roof formed a sort of verandah protecting pedestrians from sun and rain and was situated over a number of windows opening in the old walls which gave light to the post-office.

The Florentine post-office without being either beautiful or convenient, nevertheless presented an original appearance quite in harmony with the style of the old city.

On the corner of Via Calimaruzza a larg door-way gave access to a courtyard, where the postal diligences arrived and departed, and on the opposite side of Via

Vacchereccia rose an old, massive tower which, although partially demolished, was still of considerable height.

In the centre of this group of buildings was situated the church of Santa Cecilia in one of the most ancient parishes of Florence.

In fronted on a small piazza of the same name which communicated by narrow alley ways with the Piazza del Mercato Nuovo, Via Vacchereccia, and Via Calimaruza.

Around this church, as recorded by Malaspini and Villani, rose the tower and palaces of several old families belonging to the same League, and in general following the fortunes of the Ghibellina party.

Among them were the Guglialferri, Tebalducci, Malaspini, Infangati, Baroncelli, Riccialbani and the Cavalcanti.

The houses of the Guglialferri, Tebalducci and Malaspini, on account of their owners' political sympathies being opposed to the Guelph party, were condemned and confiscated by the exchequer, and afterwards became the property of the Guild of Money Changers and the residence of their Consuls.

The Guild of Money Changers, one of the most important of the city, was also one of the richest, and at one period in the history of Florence, added considerably to the wealth of the city.

The commercial associations formed by various Florentine families working as banks, take an important place in local history; their business of

banking, discounting and money lending was carried on all over the world until the most important became the victims of King Edward III of England, who effected an immense loan and then refused to pay it, and the succeeding English Governments declining to recognize it, the Bardi, Peruzzi and other Florentine families became ruined.

The military and political vicissitudes of those days also swept away the remaining fortunes engaged in banking.

The Guild of Money Changers, who managed and worked the Mint, owned a quantity of real estate, both city and country, and its offices, and entrance of Via Calimala Francesca, were filled with beautiful and valuable objects, as proved by the inventories still existing.

The group of buildings in the midst of which was the church of Santa Cecilia and the houses that fronted on Piazza Signoria underwent noteworthy alterations in the course of various centuries.

Gualtiero di Brienne, Duke of Athens, wishing to enlarge the Piazza Signoria ordered the destruction of all the houses in a line facing the Palazzo Vecchio but only a few towers and the upper part of some houses were demolished when the work was stopped owing to the Duke being driven from the city in a storm of popular fury, on account of his tyranny and oppression.

These houses remained as partial ruins for many years until the great war, which with varying fortune,

raged between the Pisan and Florentine Republics for so long a time.

Both of these states had powerful military forces and plenty of funds, and the hatred and jealousy existing between them became more intense as years went on, until it culminated in a series of wars which lasted until the strength of both parties, which was about equal, became exhausted in the prolonged struggle.

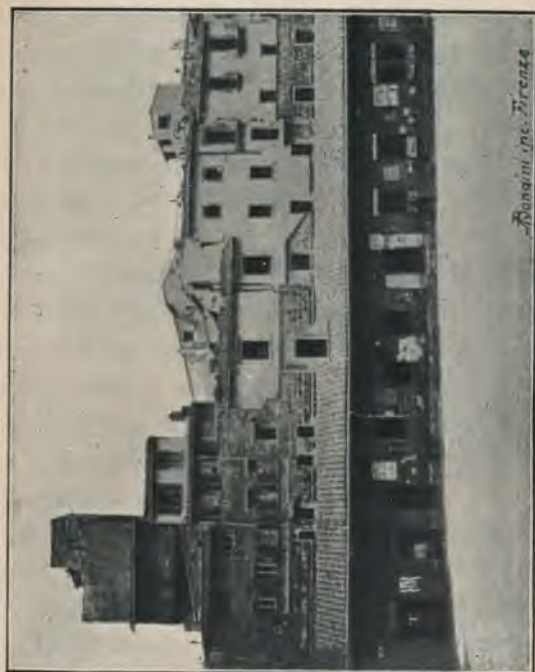
In the early period of this war, fortune smiled on the Florentines, who under able leaders, devastated the enemy territory with fire and sword.

Bonifizio Lupi, Ridolfo di Varano, Paolo Farnese, Pandolfo Malatesta, Arrigo di Monfort, celebrated Captains of Florentine bands, succeeded each other in the command of the troops, which spread terror and devastation through the Pisan territory.

In 1362, Pierino Grimaldi, at the head of Florentine galleys took the Port of Pisa by storm, and in celebrations of this victory sent to Florence the broken chains which had been drawn across the entrance of the port to prevent the passage of vessels.

The Florentines, to commemorate this victory, attacked some of them to the prophyry columns in front of San Giovanni, and placed the rest over the principal gates of the city.

Pandolfo Malatesta afterwards attacked with great energy of the Pisan Republic, occupied the Val d'Era and with a goodly number of soldiers appeared before the walls of Pisa, near which, at Casciana in July 29th 1364, he won a brilliant victory.



Pisa, Italy

THE VERANDAH OF THE PISANS.



The Pisan losses were very heavy in this battle, and a large number were taken prisoners and brought to Florence to render the celebration of the victory more impressive and solemn.

The private soldiers were crowded into rough carts while the officers and influential citizens were mounted on old broken-down horses, to cut a ridiculous figure before the eyes of the Florentine populace.

After serving for this edifying spectacle all were kept close prisoners in different portions of the city converted into military prisons.

The government of the Republic, finding their imprisonment too expensive decided to utilize their labor in public works.

They were made to build the bridge over the Greve river on the Via Pisana, and were afterwards employed on the ruins of the houses opposite the Palazzo Vecchio where they built a great wall and the roof which formed a long verandah on all that side of the piazza and was a favorite lounging place on account of its shelter from sun and rain.

For this reason the verandah, in front of the old post-offices, was named after the Pisans and remained until the middle of the present century as a mournful record of the fraternal struggle between two neighboring states.

Fortune did not, however, always favor the Florentines, for the Pisans, smarting under their series of defeats engaged the services of the English « soldier of fortune », Sir John Hawkwood, known as the

« Aguto » (the « Piercer ») who at the head of his own men strengthened by the Pisans suddenly poured down on the Florentine territory.

The fortunes of war quickly changed, and the Florentines retreating before Hawkwood's vigorous onslaught, left their fertile lands and prosperous towns to be sacked and pillaged by the enemy.

The war lasted for a long time with varying vicissitudes, and at last after both sides had become worn out and exhausted in men and money, they accepted a treaty of peace under the influence of Pope Urban V, as arranged in the Congress of Pescia.

The verandah of the Pisans remained as a memorial of these inglorious struggles, and lasted for many centuries as a protection from the elements for the loungers of the city, or for those whose business took them to the post-offices in the residence of the Guild of Money Changers.

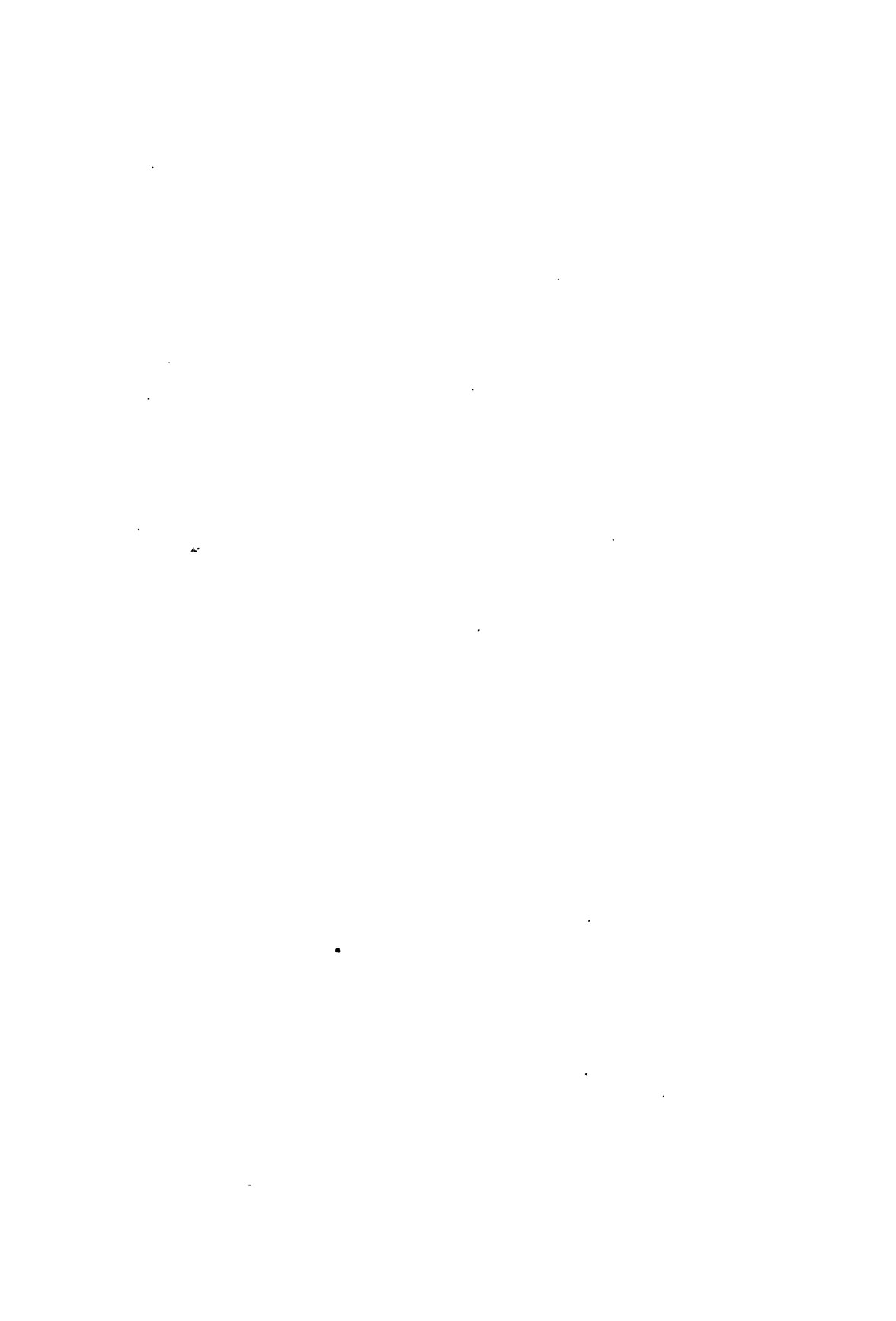
This building, from the period of the addition of the verandah built by the Pisans, underwent little change, and retained the rough outlines made by its partial demolition under the Duke of Athens.

No trace remained of the church of Santa Cecilia, suppressed in 1783, and only the old massive tower of the Infangati rose up on the corner of Via Vacchirescia, on whose ground floor the celebrated painter Antonio del Pollaiuolo had his studio.

Of medioeval antiquities preserved to our days, the Verandah of the Pisans, although one of the most characteristic, was also one of the ugliest, and no one

gretted the disappearance of a number off ill-formed artistic edifices, only recalling centuries of bloodshed tired and enmity which devastated the sister cities

Florence and Pisa, and perpetuated the record of stressing times now passed away, forgotten and absorbed in the grandeur and progress of a common country.





PIAZZA OF MERCATO VECCHIO & THE COLUMN OF ABUNDANCE.



PIAZZA OF MERCATO VECCHIO & TOWER OF THE CAPONSACCHI.





CHAPTER X.

THE OLD MARKET.

THIS was the soul, the centre, the first nucleus of Florence, that city of Roman origin of which historians have so little to tell us that they justify the meagreness of their records by declaring small and of no importance a city whose remains show clearly how prosperous and rich it had been, and the sumptuous ornamentation of those remains, of which ample traces were found, speak eloquently of the grandeur and wealth of the great people who founded it. As in a nutshell this centre of mediaeval Florence corresponded perfectly with the centre of the old Roman city.

The capitol whose existence and size gave rise to so many fables and legends, soared in this centre, as also the imposing temple dedicated to Jupiter, and edifices consecrated to different Gods, or destined to public offices, or as residencies of its mighty citizens.

All around this group of imposing buildings were the trenches, and beyond houses, streets and palatial baths. Near the corner of Via degli Speciali could be traced the remains of the marble pit of the Forum and towards Via dei Vecchietti and Piazza degli Strozzi vestiges of superb *thermae* with mosaic floors of elegant design, « *frigidariums* » or cold bath, « *tepidariums* » vapour baths, and refinements used in those public edifices. Later on, near the Baptistery other « *thermae* » were brought to light, but of more recent epoch and with less lavish decorations; also the watch-tower of a city gate and the foundations and mosaic pavements of Roman dwellings, and so on. At a depth of about fifteen feet below the present level were discovered also street pavements, the wheel-ruts most visible, and the wells, water-pipes, sewers, and tombstones — in fact every trace of a large and wealthy Roman city. All this was buried under the sand and gravel consequent of repeated inundations and by stratas of earth and charred matter, refuse of the numerous fires which in those far back days had devastated Florence.

These, then, were the foundations of this city many times besieged and destroyed by barbarians, fallen into ruin and gradually transformed till it came to serve as the basis to the mediaeval town, and the severe and simple architecture of the Middle Ages replaced entirely with its austere masses all that remained of Roman art, and today a taudry, vulgar, nondescript architecture, which has neither style nor character has replaced all the historic and mediaeval

beauty of Florence, and signifies in its decadence the third epoch in a history of twentyfive centuries!

The discovery of some tombs near the Roman Capitol would denote the existence here of a people and of times even more remote, but it would be useless on such scarce and fragmentary evidence to search in the dark and hidden past; all that could be removed has been with care placed in the Archaeological Museum, and from drawings etc. etc. the learned have a large mass of documents and facts from which to determine the topography of the Roman city. But the documents and proofs of the Mediaeval City, we had them all before our eyes, and even with a change in taste, and desire for hygiene, cleanliness, and comfort, as also the many different usages, to which by the march of progress and events many of the buildings had been adapted to, there yet still remained so many elements of the Mediaeval Past that this alone amply justified the ardent wishes of artists, scholars, and historians, to save from utter destruction at least all that was most characteristic and historic, as well as artistic.

This central portion of Florence had its brilliant period, and for several centuries it had been the residence of all the most illustrious and celebrated families. Grand palaces reared their fortress-like walls with arched windows and far projecting roofs, and from between the buttressed palaces rose the many watch-towers - a perfect forest of towers, varied in height, architecture, type and decorations. In the centre of the

palaces the courtyards with one or more « loggie », the steep staircases, the halls with frescoes walls where flowers, fruit, birds, animals, implements of chase were depicted amidst coats of arms, geometrical figures, as well as allusions both fabulous and religious. Everywhere, even in all that regarded the minor details there was that severe and austere decoration so perfectly in harmony with the art of that period as well as with its severe form of government.

Attached to the palaces and towers were the « loggie » (or verandahs) which were of characteristic significance, being the symbol and proof of the nobility and power of those families who owned them — they were the frame of all that was most brilliant and gay in the life of those days, and took the place of the ball-room and reception room of today. During the balmy summer evenings friends and relations met and whiled away the starry hours with conversation, songs and music, betrothals and marriages were discussed and arranged in the midday hours, the May-time festivals (Calendimaggio) were here celebrated, repasts and banquets were freely given here, the public watching with respect, for constant use of the « loggie » by the patricians had rendered them almost sacred, so that they even became haunts of refuge in times of dread. It is indeed sad and almost inexplicable that a day should have come when these « loggie » were brutally destroyed or changed beyond recognition, the « loggia dei Rucellai » being now the only remnant of one that still exists.

Many in this centre were the public edifices as well as private corporations, and many, too, were the churches. On the piazza afterwards called the « Foro del Re » reared their gigantic proportions the towers of the Caponsacchi and of the Amieri, and also those of the Della Tosa and Bisdomini. The church of San Miniato was surrounded by a group of superb towers, and its appellation « tra le Torri » (by the Towers) distinguished it from homonymous churches. St. Andrea, to which was annexed the oldest monastery of Florence, was of severe though beautiful structure, and we still well remember its fine campanile (church-tower) in Lombard style. All around were grouped handsome buildings, amongst others the residence of the Arte dei Rigattieri (of the pawnbrokers) beautiful in architecture as well as in internal decoration, for Fra Angelico, the Dominican, painted the shrine, now preserved at the Uffizi, and ceilings and walls were covered with frescoes and other works of art. The towers of the Ubaldini and of the Da Castiglione, the great tower of the Nerli and the lovely shrine called of the Tomba a perfect jewel in the ornamental sculpture of the 14th century.

Grand and imposing were the group of buildings belonging to different branches of the Strozzi family occupying several streets of the neighbourhood. For it was the custom, that descendants of a family should cling together even when in the course of years the bond of consanguinity no longer existed. Numerous families divided into many branches occupied with

their dwellings whole streets and piazzas, and even entire quarters of the city. The Tornaquinci who inhabited the present Palazzo Corsi had palaces and houses in all the bordering streets; the Guicciardini, Machiavelli and Guidetti occupied all the now Via dei Guicciardini, the Ridolfi more than half via Maggio, the Bardi, Albizzi, Benci, Rucellai, Medici and Adimari also had many palaces and houses, and all near one to the other. Few families, though could compete with the Strozzi, and all the buildings towards the present Via Monalda and the Porta Rossa, as well as in Via dei Tornabuoni and Vigna Nuova, as also the palace since named « Strozzino », belonged to this mighty family. In times of feud and war, families could easily barricade themselves and defend the quarter they inhabited. In the course of time many families, and some of the oldest, became extinct or went away into exile, others fell into poverty and sold their palaces; and the sublime towers, abandoned by their owners and no longer valued or needed for defence, were let or sold for different uses, and the material and moral decline of the beautiful Mediaeval City commenced and rapidly spread.

The fine piazza destined to become a Market Place, had at first a most irregular aspect, and only wooden booths and rough sheds surrounded the raised circular pavement called « Corona di Mercato »; but these soon became fixtures in stone and masonry, and little by little all the free spaces were occupied by vendors of victuals, and these increased so in number that the



MERCATO VECCHIO - VIA DEI CAVALIERI.



noble families still remaining in this quarter emigrated, and their palaces became tenement houses where numberless families lived, the towers were diminished in height to avoid the expense of repairs, the « loggie » closed in and used as stores and shops, and the spacious banquet halls, the frescoed rooms, were partitioned off and divided, so that in a comparatively short space of time the greed of gain, the indifference to keep intact records of art and beauty, the barbarous squalor and dirt of a low population, with the gradual decay of age, obliterated, mutilated, and altered those glorious remains of a famous period. But they existed still in our day, and it would not have been impossible to restore what was beautiful, and to remove all that was noxious and cherish with care the almost unique specimens of Florentine architecture of the Middle Ages.

Certainly it would have been impossible to have kept that whole centre of Florence in the deplorable state which time and circumstances had brought it to and particularly in the large quarter of the Jews, the Ghetto, all trace of beauty and art had disappeared, and it had become a sink of filth and disease and was a blot and a taint to the city; but it ought all along to have been remembered that in the midst of that decay and ruin there existed many treasures of art and history, and that with careful discrimination and study those treasures could and should have been saved from destruction, and the heart of Florence would have offered to the scholars and artists of the whole

world a rare jewel for lovers of art and history - ~~==~~
complete record of Mediaeval times!

The principal remaining palaces were those of the Amieri between Piazza del Mercato and St. Andrea, and those of the Da Castiglione, Anselmi, Sassetti, Della Luna - all of which having the merit of recalling not only periods of art but historic incidents of a glorious past. The towers still showed their massive construction, and amidst the many, I will mention those of the Caponsacchi, Amieri, Ubaldini, Della Luna, Pilli, Romaldelli, Cavalcanti, Siminetti, Cosi and of the « loggie » those of the de' Pilli, de' Tosinghi, de' Brunelleschi, Strozzi and Agli, - these and many others less important.

The ancient church of St. Andrea bore still through many transformations the traces of its original structure, and it could have become the kernel of a museum of Mediaeval Florence. Near by St. Andrea still existed the buildings formerly occupied by the Arts of the Linajoli (linen weavers), of the Rigattieri (pawnbrokers or clothes merchants), the grand tower of the Ubaldini, and, amidst a network of narrow streets the palaces and houses of the Da Castiglione, Caponsacchi, Amieri, Da Cignano, Malegonnelle, Lamberti, Cavalcanti, Siminetti, Della Sannella, Bostichi, Benzi; and still among these mighty dwellings stood the mutilated towers, grim records of the past power of their owners.

In this group alone would have figured one church, five palaces, and seven towers! And besides this, four different specimens of architecture belonging to the

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Arts of the Medici e Speziali (doctors and chemists) de' Rigattieri (pawnbrokers) degli Albergatori (hostlers) degli Oliandoli (merchants of oil) and all these offering great variety of architecture and of decoration; elegant courtyards, fine vestibules, halls with vaulted ceilings resting on sculptured capitals, carved or painted beams, cornices and brackets, devout shrines, coats of arms fashioned in every dimension, lintels of doors and windows in carved stone, and in every imaginable space frescoes, paintings, stone carvings!

A more complete, attractive and interesting collection of remains and memories of a great period it would have been impossible to imagine; and yet without mercy all this was ruthlessly destroyed. And what have we now in its stead? A large Piazza without harmony or style, with around it buildings of no particular architecture, of which plaster and stucco are its principal decorations, — wide streets at right angles, nothing to remind one of glorious Italian art, for they are but miserable imitations of the worst modern and barocco style. Here and there are still left by some unexplained pity, the dark, timestained walls of the Palagio dei Compiobbesi, residence of the Consul's of the Arte della Lana (wool weavers), a re-fashioned portion of one of the Sassetti palaces, and, hidden in a back street, the façade of the Palace of the Catellini da Castiglione! Poor sad remnants that seem now like old patches in a new and gaudy raiment! Of all this wholesale destruction, fragments only have been saved, which have been deposited and arranged in the

cloisters of San Marco. Alas, remnants only! that fill the heart with unspeakable sorrow like the sight of the gathered bones from a battle-field! There one can see the columns and pilasters from the « loggie » of the Pilli, of the Strozzi, of the Tosinghi, of the Agli; the lintels of the doors of the residences of the Consuls of the Pawnbrokers, Hostlers and Oil-vendors, the beautiful and original windows of the ancient Vescovado (Episcopal palace); architraves with coats of arms, columns of staircases and terraces, bits of cornices, pieces from friezes, capitals and sculptured figures of animals - which form altogether subjects worthy of study and meditation. And more important still, for far more rare, the collection of pieces of mural decoration, frescoes and so forth which were discovered under coatings of plaster and dirt, and saved from the general destruction; these offer most precious specimens of their kind; as till they were discovered, little or nothing was known of the interior decorations of private dwellings, of that epoch.

All that remains of the old centre of Florence, the Vecchio Mercato, is limited now to this collection of fragments, which is scarcely even sufficient to give one a vague knowledge of the richness and exquisite sentiment for art which was the dominating feeling in our beautiful city.



CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCHES.



THE suppression of many ecclesiastical and religious communities necessitated a great change in monastic edifices and numbers of churches and convents were either entirely closed or adopted to purposes very different from those they had originally been built for, and also in these last thirty years many of the churches of Florence were almost entirely transformed and restored to their primal beauty and style, and it is with pride that we note that in all that regards ecclesiastical architecture (except with some few exceptions) the pure true sentiment of art had dominated: with the pecuniary help of citizens and strangers several churches have been restored, and the superstructures and barocco decorations that spoilt them removed.

Santa Maria del Fiore (the Duomo) has her beautiful façade adorned with rare marbles, sculptures and mosaics, and though this work gave rise to ardent di-

scussions and criticisms, yet now this façade is numbered amongst the greatest and most perfect artistic monuments of this century.

Santa Croce, too, has her façade, due to the generosity of a few citizens. It was finished in 1863 and is but feeble as a work of art, and cannot indeed be praised.

The church of Ognissanti, which was almost crumbling away has been entirely restored from original designs by Matteo Nigetti, but both this church and Santa Croce date from the 13th century, and it would have been in better taste to harmonize the exterior with the interior.

Santa Maria Novella was not restored with that true spirit of taste in style, and we can but deplore the changes made in some of the windows to allow of modern altars being placed before them as also many beautiful tombstones being removed and the pavement replaced in regular slabs of marble; neither can we admire the exuberantly rich high-altar, which hides the paintings of Ghirlandajo. All this is as completely wrong in style and out of place as the incrustation of shining « scagliola » of recent date which cover the ancient columns of San Miniato. But in compensation for these few errors we admire with all our soul the admirable repairs of Sta Trinita, which since the sad period of decadence had been irrecongnisable, and which now, under the admirable direction of two architects — Prof. Castellazzi and Cav. del Moro — has been restored to its original beauty and taste, the inspiration of great artists of the 14th and 15th century.

With equal pleasure can be admired the Cloisters of Sta Croce and the superb Chiostro verde of Sta Maria Novella, and the chapel called « Cappellone degli Spagnuoli »; also the harmonious repairs in the sacristy of Sta Felicità, a work of Brunelleschi's; of the ancient refectory of St. Spirito, as well as of its bell-tower and dome.

San Marco's convent and cloisters, also well restored and used now as a Museum.

The vestibule of the **SS. Annunziata**, built by Piero de' Medici has been restored in perfect style and harmony, as also the churches of Or San Michele, the Badia, San Felice in Piazza, San Giovan Battista, &c.

More than twenty, however, have been the churches that in these last thirty years have been either totally destroyed, or changed beyond recognition, some of them most important in the history of Art. We will therefore here name those that are especially worthy of record. \

St. Andrea - one of the oldest churches in Florence - for the monastery attached to it named the Badiola, can be traced back as far as the latter part of the 9th century. This church, situated in the old centre of the town, had always retained intact its bell-tower (Campanile) of lombard style, which now has been entirely destroyed.

SS. Annunziata - or the Nunziatina, - in Via della Chiesa, called then Via della Nunziatina, was built in 1515 at the same time that the convent annexed to it was founded, and which was then inhabited by the

Ammantellate nuns. This convent is now a public poor-school, and nothing of note is in existence save an « affresco » on the street by a pupil of Poccetti.

S. Appollonia - in Via San Gallo, was the church of a rich and large convent of Benedictines. This church was in the best style of the 15th century. Michelangiolo, who had two nieces in this convent, is believed to have partially enlarged and beautified it. It is now used as a military store-house.

Le Cappuccine - This was the oratory of St. Onofrio, belonging to the Guild of Dyers who owned all the land in that quarter of the town, and had there, besides this oratory, a hospital and several dwelling houses. After the convent was suppressed, the church in Via dei Malcontenti was demolished, and what remained of the Dyers' buildings were turned into barracks, where we can still on their walls observe the coat of arms of the Guild.

The neighbouring work-house, la « Pia Casa di Lavoro », occupies what were formerly the churches and monastery of Sta Maria Montedomini and Sta Maria a Monticelli. The former, in pure architecture of the 16th century, still partly exists.

San Carlo Borromeo - in Via St. Agostino, was formerly a convent of Barnabites and was highly decorated with stucco and frescoes. Now it is used for a gymnastic hall.

Sta Caterina degli Abbandonati - in Via Sta Caterina, is now used as a salt deposit. Formerly it was a church belonging to the Franciscans.

San Clemente - a very small church in Via San Gallo, lavishly decorated in the best 16th century style. This church, which was restored in 1589 by Porzia dei Medici, and inhabited by nuns of the Misericordia, is now the store-room of the pharmacy of the Military Hospital.

San Domenico nel Maglio - in point of architecture this was perhaps one of the most important and singular churches, with its three high and narrow naves divided by elegant columns. It is supposed that Fra Ristoro da Campi, one of the architects of Sta Maria Novella, designed this church which had been founded in 1292 by Dominican nuns. Now it is used as well as the large orchard, for the school of Military doctors.

Oratorio di San Filippo Neri - annexed to the convent of the order of St. Philip and to the church of San Firenze, very classic in style and decoration, now a hall of one of the Tribunals.

San Girolamo sulla Costa - an ancient monastery of the Vallombrosa monks, built in 1382 on land owned by the parish of St. Martino a Gangalandi. On the site of the « Costa San Giorgio » can still be seen the doors of antique design, and a shrine containing a masterful fresco of the 15th century. The church and monastery were joined to that of San Giorgio and turned into barracks for soldiers, and the many pictures and works of art were placed in the Uffizi and Pitti galleries.

San Girolamo delle Poverine - The land was given by the Alberti family to the « Povere Ingesuate », and in 1395 their convent and church were commenced. But, built between Via delle Torricelle and the Arno, the floods continually damaged these edifices. There were also turned into barracks. The beautiful altar by Andrea della Robbia is now in the National Museum, and a picture by Perugino that was in the church, is now in one of the Galleries.

San Jacopo di Ripoli - Barracks and stores now occupy this church and convent of the nuns of Pian di Ripoli of the Domenican rule. In later days the nuns of Montalve held there a school for the young ladies of the aristocracy. The church was adorned with many objects of interest, and over the entrance-door still remains a superb bassorilievo in terracotta by Andrea della Robbia.

Sta Maria degli Angioli - This celebrated monastery of Vallombrosians, containing treasures of arte, stood with the church of the same name in Via degli Alfani. Pippo Spano degli Scolari intended transforming it, but the construction of the large temple though begun was never finished, and in course of time the cloisters as well as the church and monastery were turned into a hospital which is now under the name of Sta Maria Nuova changed entirely and modernized.

Sta Maria della Crocetta - founded by Suor Domenica del Paradiso an impassioned nun celebrated for her prophecies in the year 1511. She also built the church in Via Ventura now called Via Laura: the



CHURCH OF SAN PIER BUONCONSIGLIO.



convent and church, however, were still unfinished in 1573, and the Medici terminated the works. These buildings now-a-days have been adapted for the use of the Technical Institute.

Sta Maria Sopr'Arno - in Via de' Bardi, on the bank of the Arno, one of the oldest parish churches of Florence. Over the door was the sculptured coat of arms of the Rimbaldesi, and on the façade upheld by brackets, a beautiful funeral sarcophagus with the arms of the Bardi, which now is in the National Museum. This church was completely destroyed when the new Lung'Arno Torrigiani was opened.

San Pier Buonconsiglio - commonly called San Pierino, in the Mercato Vecchio, near to the corner of Via degli Strozzi. One reached the door by a double staircase and its whole architecture was exceedingly original. It belonged to one of the oldest parishes of the town, the palaces of the Sassetti, Anselmi, Della Luna, Amieri, Cipriani and Tornaquinci being in this parish, which was suppressed in 1785 and aggregated to that of San Gaetano; and later still the buildings were used for secular purposes. Over the door, a lunette by Luca della Robbia, now in the Museo Nazionale, is reckoned amongst his finest works.

San Rocco - a small but beautiful oratory near the Porta San Gallo, was torn down when Piazza Cavour was created.

San Silvestro - a modest little church annexed to a monastery built in the middle of the 16th century by Francesco Minerbetti, Bishop of Arezzo, existed in

Via dei Pinti: but many years since, the church was closed and the monastery turned into a school for poor girls.

Santa Teresa – Though this church was built in the epoch of decadence, yet this octagonal temple had decorations both elegant and fine, and was most worthy of note. It was originally built by the Guardi family, but subsequently was dowered by the Medici and given to the Teresian nuns. It is sad to think that after the rule of these holy women it should have been so profaned as to be reduced to a prison!

San Tommaso – was still officiated when the works in the centre of the town necessitated its destruction. The interior had already been completely modernized, but the outward aspect still showed traces of remote antiquity, particularly the primitively shaped windows and the interesting « bassorilievo » which adorned its walls. This church, which had first been under the patronage of the Sizi family, then came under that of the Medici whose first dwelling houses were in this parish. In front of the church was a quaint portico, and in it several very good pictures on wood, some by Jacopo da Pratovecchio, commonly called Jacopo del Casentino. These are now in the Galleries.

Sta Verdiana – church and monastery of very ancient date, had been built near the city walls at the end of the Via dell'Agnolo. Nuns of the Vallombrosian rule lived there, and the greatest families of Florence had contributed to its adornment. But many

changes were made as the years passed, and a century ago not much of note or beauty remained but the entrance door, which still existing bears on the architrave the coats of arms of the Republic. Suppressed entirely, of late years this monastery has become a prison for women.

To the list of churches suppressed or destroyed of late years, we might still add many of minor importance, such as the Chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie and Sta Maria della Carità on the Ponte alle Grazie, the oratory of the Madonna near Ponte alla Carraia, the oratory of San Rocco in Via dell'Orto and the little church of the Jesuits in Borgo Pinti near the Panciatichi palace but these last-named were of far lesser importance and were not pictorial and artistic records like the others.



CHAPTER XII.

HEIRLOOMS.

Now that we have illustrated and as it were placed before your eyes the historic inheritance that, in great measure, has been most carelessly dissipated, we will try to classify and describe what still remains of the most characteristic and typical of our mediaeval architecture, in the hope that these precious heirlooms entrusted to the citizens of Florence should be lovingly and carefully cherished. This inheritance of our ancestors has no need indeed of being specially described, for all who have the sentiment of art and beauty, will reverence and deeply feel the duty towards history, of religiously preserving what still remains. So much has been written already about Florence that details on the many great and noble monuments of this city would be superfluous, monuments that are a glory for Italy are more than sufficiently protected by the admiration of all the civilized

world; but we will simply enumerate a number of buildings still existing in Florence of that peculiarly severe type of architecture so entirely connected with the most thrilling part of this city's history, and that though now mutilated, changed, and hidden amidst modern edifices, still are able to recall most vividly to the scholar and the artist, the type and character of the Middle Ages, and in so doing we trust a sentiment of respect for them will be awakened in all classes, and that thus these precious relics will be saved from the relentless wave of so-called modern improvement.

The old streets that contain the most important mediaeval remains are Borgo degli Albizzi, Borgo San Jacopo, Borgo Santi Apostoli, Via della Condotta; also Vie dei Bardi, dei Guicciardini, de' Neri, de' Tornabuoni, Borgo de' Greci, Piazza de' Peruzzi. Many in these are the towers, palaces, houses, which have on them the stamp of the 13th and 14th centuries. Let us try to describe those buildings where the style and decoration of the Middle Ages more clearly emerges.

Mediaeval Florence presented the aspect of a forest of towers, for several hundred stood proudly amongst the palaces of the mighty aristocracy, towers which were symbolic of the power and authority of their owners as well as the sad means of prolonging the bloody feuds that broke out between the many factions and families till at last the hatred of the people dismantled and rendered unserviceable these grim and silent potentates, and they then remained, useless and

mutilated, as records only of the past, and now of these but little remains. But still those stones speak eloquently of their past strength and might.

Of the palaces and houses few have kept intact the mediaeval character, for many uses and needs have wrought great alterations but still there is enough to render what remains most precious for the study of the art and architecture of those times. Let us therefore collect what still remains as sacred documents of the past and from them read the names, most of which are extinct, which are so closely connected and consecrated by Florentine history. We will group street by street, as pearls from a broken thread, these memories, these heirlooms, which so vividly depict to cultivated minds the past, and the history of Mediaeval Florence.

Borgo degli Albizzi. - The palaces in this street formerly called Corso Por San Piero, date of the 13th and 14th century, a palace of the Albizzi between the Canto alle Rondini (the Swallows'corner) and Piazza di San Pier Maggiore, part of a tower of the Albizzi opposite Via delle Seggiole, and another near the Palace of the Alessandri, a palace and house of the Pazzi family with a fine courtyard at the corner of Via de' Giraldi, a tower of the Giraldi, being above the palace now of the Della Stufa.

Borgo de' Greci. - The palace of the Bourbon del Monte, formerly of the Peruzzi, has its façade in pure 14th century style.

Borgo Santi Apostoli. - In this street on the corner of

Via Por Sta Maria the grand tower of the Baldovinetti, one of the finest and best-preserved, adjoins the palace of the same family, the inferior part of which is perfect (13th century). The tower of the Buondelmonte, and later of the Acciajuoli, and part of the palace of the Acciajuoli and Pettini. On this palace can still be seen, the corbels which sustained the crowning battlements, the lower part of the Palazzo dei Buondelmonti (N.° 5) and the lower part of the Palazzetto degli Altoviti (N.° 14).

Borgo Santa Croce. — Palazzo Spinelli, a fine and well-preserved edifice of the 15th century.

Borgo San Jacopo. — In this street are several well-preserved though mutilated towers of the aristocracy. Those of the de' Rossi on the corner of Via dei Guicciardini, of the Ridolfi di Borgo, of the Belfredelli, and the most important perhaps of all, the tower of the Marsili opposite the church of San Jacopo. On the Arno side the towers of the Barbadori and Lotti, the palace of the Belfredelli now del Corno, with its fine 14th century courtyard.

Piazza de' Giudici. — The Palazzo dei Giudici, formerly the 12th century castle of Altafronte, much altered though in successive centuries.

Piazza de' Mozzi. — This palace of the Mozzi family belonged also to the Bardi, and was called the « Corte Mainarda ». It retains the severe style of architecture of the 14th century with its tower and battlements and projecting roof sustained on five brackets.

Piazza de' Peruzzi. — One side of the piazza is occu-

pied by houses of the Peruzzi built in the 14th century on the walls and foundations of an amphitheatre called the « Parlascio Fiorentino ».

Piazza San Biagio. — Here we find the 14th century palace of the Giandonati which has a very severe façade in rongh stone with here and there remains of « graffito ». Also the façade of the church of San Biagio, formerly Sta Maria Sopra Porta, and that of the Palace which one day belonged to the Captains of the Guelph party. Both maintain well the original character of 13th century architecture. Most important are the ornamental decorations also in « Graffito » of the palace formerly Canacci, a fine work of the 15th century.

Piazza Santa Elisabetta. — On one side of the church, next to the spot where San Michele delle Trombe existed, can still be seen the summit of a round tower, the « Pagliazza » which served as a prison. Between the piazza and the Corso stands the tall but mutilated tower once of the Ghiberti.

Piazza San Lorenzo. — Here the palace of the Della Stufa is very well preserved and shows clearly architecture of the 14th century.

Piazza San Pier Maggiore. — Facing the portico of the ancient church of San Pier Maggiore stands proudly still the fine tower of the Donati. It was not far from this spot that Corso Donati, in rebellion to the orders of the Signoria, preferred death to submission, defending himself bravely to the last. The palace near by with projections built evidently in the 14th century was of the Corbizzi.

Piazza della Signoria. - The Communal edifices between Via dei Gondi and Via del Braccio served in olden times as Tribunals for merchants, and the most ancient part is 14th century work. Here was the palace of the Asini family.

Via dei Bardi. - This is one of the streets which has the most numerous mediaeval buildings. The Palazzo Canigiani of late years modernized, was formerly of the Sarioni, and has a very characteristic courtyard. Worthy of note is the palace of the Capponi, formerly Da Uzzano. On the opposite side of the street are the remains of the towers of the Bardi. At the beginning of the street near Ponte Vecchio two beautiful towers, one of the Mannelli called Pontegiani (of the bridge) the other of the Ridolfi di Ponte which had belonged to the Guelph party. On the Arno bank remains can be traced of the towers and houses of the Sassolini and Bardi and opposite, part of the palace of the Mannelli, now Capponi.

Via delle Belle Donne. - At the corner of Via degli Antinori, can be admired the superb remains of the palace of the Aldobrandini di Lippo, with original biforcated windows. This is 14th century architecture.

Via dei Benci. - Most important as a construction of the beginning of the 15th century is the Palazzo dei Bardi, in olden times Busini. The Mancini palace which belonged to the Alberti has also many details that are very original; and higher up at the corner of Borgo Santa Croce are the towers and the « loggia » of the Alberti. On both sides of the street towards

Sta Croce we remark the palaces and houses of the Peruzzi and Alberti, who were the great potentates of this quarter of the town. The palaces of the Alberti which face to the west, then became the property of the Benci.

Calimara. — In the midst of all the new buildings has been left the remains of the fine tower which served as residence to the consuls of the Wool Guild and which originally was the Palace of the Compibbesi.

Via Calzaioli. — The tower that rises over the houses at the corner of Piazza degli Adimari belonged to the Adimari. From Or San Michele to Piazza della Signoria the lower part of most of the houses preserve the grandiose architecture of the 14th century. Those on the east side were the palace of the Captains of Or San Michele, the palace of the Cavalcanti, and, near Porta Rossa, the palace of the Guild of Merchants who, took the dwelling house of the Guglialferri. On the west side stood the palaces of the Bonaguisi.

Via dei Cerretani. — The Palazzo Martelli in olden days of the Bezzoli, is perhaps the finest example of Florentine 14th century architecture.

Via dei Cimatori. — On the corner of Via dei Cerchi still can be detected the columns of the ancient « loggia » of the Cerchi, and in the little piazza dei Cimatori the palaces of the Cerchi and of the Rinuccini.

Via della Condotta. — Most important in its pure 13th century style, is a palace at the corner of the lane called Cerchi, which during a certain period

was used as a residence by the Signoria of Florence. Traces of the fine architecture of the 15th century can still be found in the palace formerly belonging to the Giugni family and now the old-fashioned Hotel della Luna. Of this same architecture is also the present palace of the Uguccioni, and that of the Sacchetti next to the old convent of the Badia.

Corso. — On the corner of the Via Sta Elisabetta still stands part of a tower of the Ricci, the owners as well of the palace on the opposite side of the street on which is a red cross which formerly was the sign of an ancient chemist's shop. This palace used to be called « la casa delle Vedove » because it was the habitation of the dowagers of the numerous and noble Ricci family.

Via Dante Alighieri. — The tower called Della Castagna, and which served for the defence of the monastery of the Badia, stands here at the corner of Piazza di San Martino, and the modest though ancient little house erroneously called Dante's house, is nearby. It certainly belonged to the Alighieri, who possessed several in this locality, but it is not their most important palace, and we therefore doubt its having been the habitation of the Divine Poet.

Via Ghibellina. — The Palazzo Quaratesi, anciently Salviati, can be considered as one of the finest examples of the Florentine palace of the 14th century; and elegant in the style and architecture of the latter part of the 15th is the palace of the Gherardi, now the property of the Curadossi, at the corner of Via dei Pepi.

Via dei Ginori. — The grand old palace, owned now by the Gatteschi and Montauto was built by the Neroni and is still well preserved in the 15th century style. The courtyard, however, is pure 14th century. The neighbouring palace of the Ginori is also in the good old Florentine style.

Via dei Giudet. — This narrow lane inhabited till quite lately exclusively by Jews, preserves houses and foundations of towers that are purely mediaeval, and they were owned anciently by the Belfredelli, Ridolfi di Borgo, del Corno, Machiavelli and Barbadori.

Via dei Guicciardini. — The palace still owned by the Guicciardini, and in which are incorporated two towers, that of the Malefici and one of the Guicciardini preserves almost intact the character and architecture of the 14th century. The palaces of the Barbadori opposite the church of Sta Felicità and that of the Rossi on the piazza, are also very interesting specimens of architecture.

Via Lambertesca. — At the corner of Via Por Santa Maria stand side by side two ancient towers of the Girolami and of the Gherardini. Also the this latter family belonged the mutilated tower on the opposite side of the way.

Via Maggio. — In 14th century style is the palace formerly Giovanni, and the fine old palace of the Ridolfi, in which the trace of decorations in graffito can be seen, is in good 15th century style.

Via dei Martelli. — In this street only the façade of a little house, corner of Piazza del Duomo, preserved

the stamp of the Middle Ages. It belonged to the Guild of Merchants.

Via del Mercatino. — A very interesting relic of 14th century architecture is the Salviati palace at the corner of Via della Vigna Vecchia. This palace passed from the family Cintoia to the Parenti and finally to the Salviati.

Via dei Neri. — Here, too, are several buildings dating from the Middle Ages. Opposite the Loggia del Grano the remains of a palatial residence of the Talani, and next to the loggia a palace which from the Fagni passed to the Cattani da Diacceto. Near by the palace of the Solvani, and in Via dei Rustici part of the residence of the Neri and then of the Rustici.

Via delle Oche. — The palace and tower which still proudly stand opposite to Sta Elisabetta, and well preserving the 13th century architecture, belonged to the Bisdomini.

Via dei Pandolfini. — Most worthy of note the façade of the 15th century palace of the celebrated family of the Valori now the property of the Galli Tassi.

Via dei Pepi. — Here we remark the ancient palace of the Berlinghieri, now Pepi, the interior of which dates from the 14th century.

Via Por Sta Maria. — Here we find three most important towers of the Middle Ages: the tower of the Baldovinetti, the tower of the Amidei, from which project two large lions' heads, and the tower of the Girolami. From above the palace of the Carducci at the Lung'Arno corner, we find the tower called « del

Leone » or dei Consorti, it being common property of several families.

Via Porta Rossa. — In that portion of the street commonly called Baccano, where on both sides buildings dating from the 13th century belonging originally to the Cavalcanti. In the north portion of the street, of artistic and historic importance is the palace of the Davanzati, and the towers of the Monaldi and Foresi.

Via San Niccolò. — This is one of the streets which has more than all others preserved its originality in style and character of the Middle Ages. On the north side are, worthy of note, the houses formerly of the Mozzi, and the elegant palace of the Nasi with its façade adorned with graffite of great value being almost unique of their kind. Further on, the palaces of the Quaratesi, and on the southern side the mediaeval palace of the Alamanni in roughcut free stone.

Via Sto Spirito. — The palace, anciently of the Mannetti, is a fine example of Florentine architecture of the 14th century.

Via dei Tavolini. — On the corner of Via dei Cerchi can be seen the remains of a tower formerly of the Galigai, and since of the Giugni.

Via delle Terme. — In this street we find the back of the palace of the Captains of the Guelph party, of 14th century architecture. The façade which corresponded, on another street, was designed by Brunellesco. We also note in this street the remains of the towers of the Guidi and of the Buondelmonti, whose palaces are near by.

Via dei Tornabuoni. — Three palaces preserve most faithfully the severe character of the Florentine architecture of the 13th and 14th century, and these are the palaces of the Spini, the Gianfigliuzzi, and one formerly of the Strozzi, and afterwards owned by the Cambi del Nero and the Mazzinghi. Of great artistic and historic interest is the lower part of the palace opposite Sta Trinita, formerly belonging to the celebrated Spini family, where also can be seen traces of the loggia of the same family.

Via della Vigna Nuova. — Of mediaeval architecture is a beautiful doorway, the lintels of which are all decorated with the lilies from the arms of the Minerbetti.

Chiasso dei Baroncelli. — Here we find the Palace also a good specimen of 13th century architecture.

Now that we have enumerated the greater portion of what still remains of the numerous buildings and monuments of a period famous in art as well as in history, we will close our modest work, expressing the hope that these heirlooms will become dear and sacred to all and that our citizens will protect such precious relics, and not allow that these records should be added to the list of vanished treasures and memories of by-gone Florence.







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